



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Monthly Retail Trade

Sales and Inventories

March 1997

BR/97-3
Issued May 1997

NOTICE OF REVISED ESTIMATES.—The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales and inventories estimates were revised based on the results of the 1995 *Annual Retail Trade Survey*. Estimates have been revised from January 1993.

Sales. Total sales for all retail stores in the United States during March 1997 were an estimated \$213.0 billion. These estimates were adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. The March 1997 sales were virtually unchanged -0.03 (± 0.5) from February 1997, while the year-to-year change from March 1996 was an estimated +5.6 (± 1.0) percent.

Excluding the automotive group, the March sales were +0.1 (± 0.3) percent when compared to the February 1997 sales, while the change from March 1996 was +5.8 (± 0.7) percent.

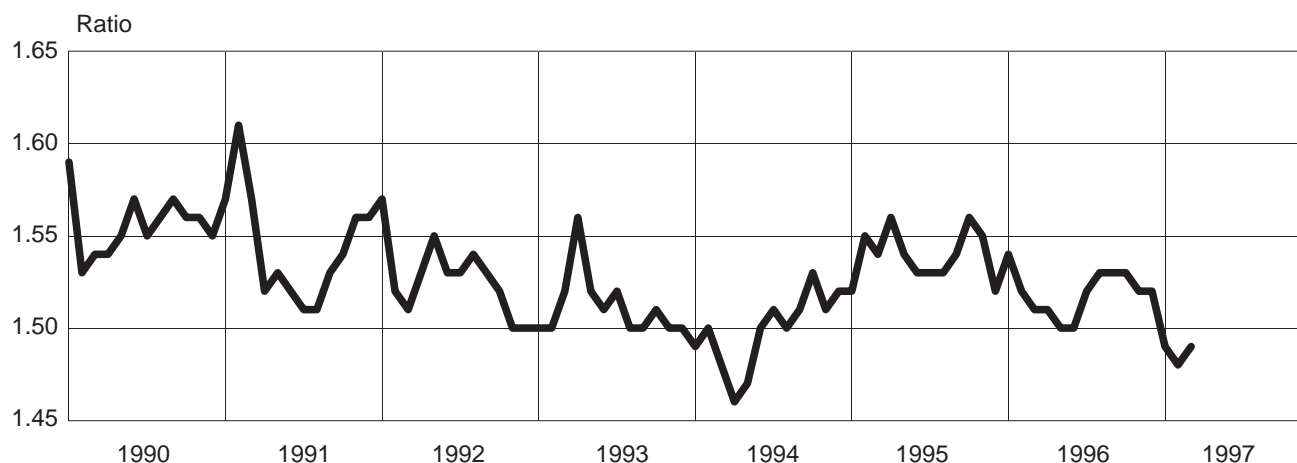
The year-to-year changes for the major kinds of business ranged from the building materials group, which were +12.5 (± 3.8) percent, to the furniture group stores, which were +3.0 (± 2.0) percent.

Inventories. After adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, total retail inventories in stores and warehouses servicing retail establishments were an estimated \$316.5 billion at the end of March. The month-to-month percentage change from February inventories was an estimated +0.2 (± 0.2) and was an estimated +4.2 (± 0.7) percent above March 1996.

For durable goods stores the percentage change from February was +0.7 (± 0.4) percent, while the change from March 1996 was +5.8 (± 1.2) percent. For nondurable goods stores, the month-to-month change from February was -0.4 (± 0.2) percent, while the year-to-year change from March 1996 was +2.4 (± 0.6) percent.

The total inventories/sales ratio for March based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.49, down .02 from March a year ago.

Figure 1.
Retail Inventories/Sales Ratios: January 1990 – March 1997
(Seasonally adjusted, but not adjusted for price changes)



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Monthly Retail Trade.

Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is in Appendix B.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Nancy Piesto, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone 301-457-2706/2708.

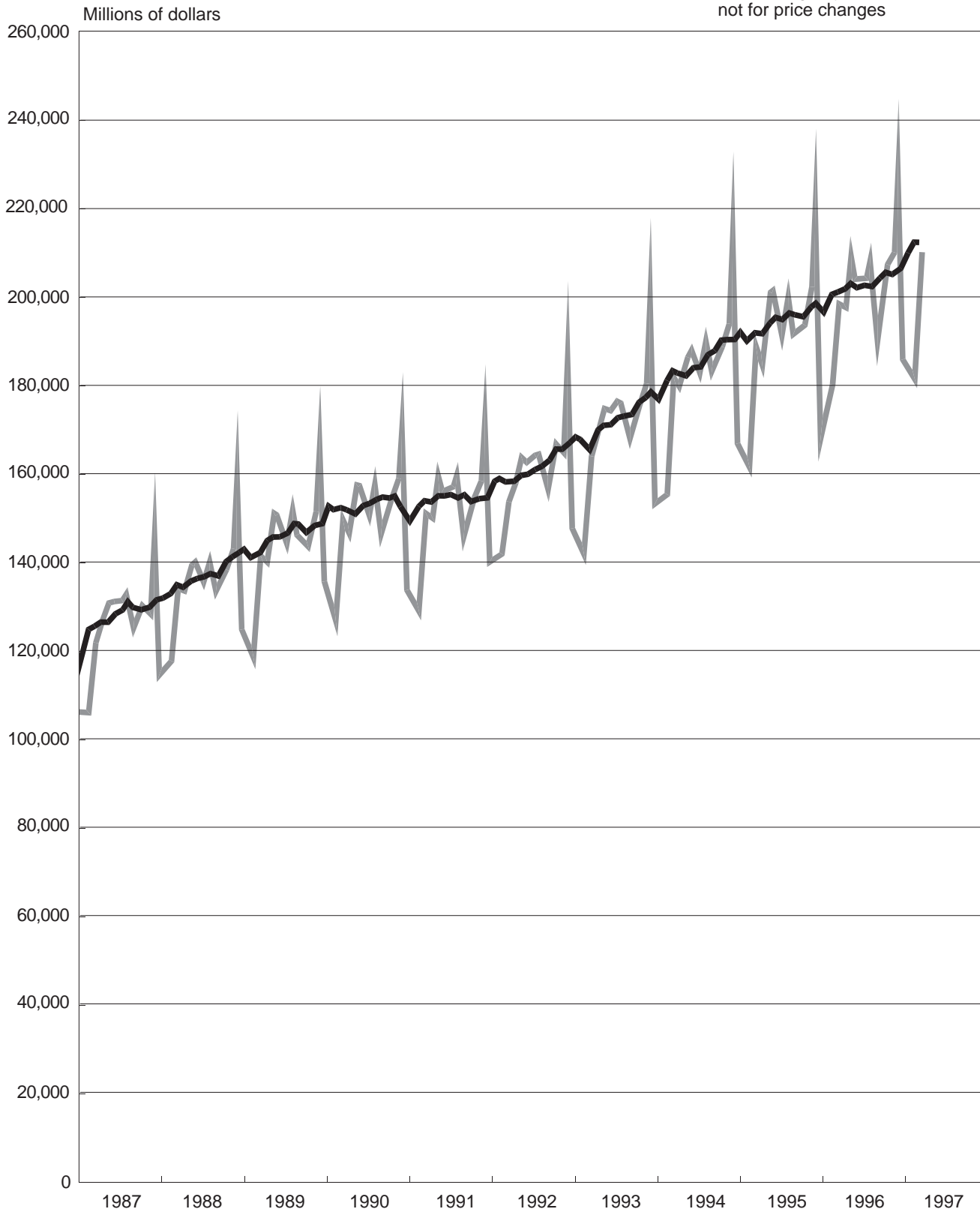
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Figure 2.
Estimated Monthly Retail Sales:
January 1987 – March 1997

— Unadjusted
— Adjusted for seasonal, holiday,
and trading-day differences, but
not for price changes



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Monthly Retail Trade.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997			1996										Total 3 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar. ^P	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1997	1996
	Unadjusted															
	Retail sales, total	186,064	183,530	210,155	199,413	198,610	213,754	204,705	204,817	212,247	195,749	207,531	210,236	244,719	579,749	552,928
	Total (excl. automotive group)	140,539	136,278	155,175	146,628	147,447	158,666	152,745	152,803	159,851	147,371	156,473	164,872	201,187	431,992	410,962
	Durable goods, total	74,051	75,424	86,954	82,506	82,958	90,210	85,962	86,024	87,258	80,509	84,794	80,826	90,163	236,429	224,632
52	Building materials group stores	8,859	8,870	11,014	9,776	11,936	13,348	12,892	12,718	12,300	11,634	12,316	10,921	10,350	28,743	26,070
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	7,975	7,942	9,760	8,663	10,164	11,309	10,932	11,111	10,752	10,086	10,784	9,702	8,967	25,677	23,346
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	6,862	6,964	8,622	7,559	8,817	9,830	9,514	9,758	9,454	8,898	9,478	8,403	7,608	22,448	20,219
525	Hardware stores	1,113	978	1,138	1,104	1,347	1,479	1,418	1,353	1,298	1,188	1,306	1,299	1,359	3,229	3,127
55 ex 554	Automotive group	45,525	47,252	54,980	52,785	51,163	55,088	51,960	52,014	52,396	48,378	51,058	45,364	43,532	147,757	141,966
551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	42,853	44,758	52,044	49,845	48,107	51,891	48,814	48,753	49,142	45,399	47,786	42,420	40,761	139,655	133,815
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers	41,206	42,704	49,086	47,609	45,418	48,948	45,941	46,141	46,259	43,283	45,720	40,626	39,046	132,996	128,386
551	Motor vehicle dealers, new & used	38,051	39,122	45,242	43,763	41,745	45,430	42,613	42,789	42,970	40,270	42,423	37,578	36,237	122,415	118,503
553	Auto & home supply stores	2,672	2,494	2,936	2,940	3,056	3,197	3,146	3,261	3,254	2,979	3,272	2,944	2,771	8,102	8,151
57	Furniture group stores	10,390	9,933	10,929	10,617	10,143	10,639	10,507	10,686	11,326	10,721	11,211	12,483	15,608	31,252	30,162
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,227	5,000	5,567	5,347	5,209	5,489	5,382	5,590	5,793	5,443	5,822	6,347	6,720	15,794	14,868
5712	Furniture stores	3,227	3,096	3,335	3,252	3,096	3,223	3,144	3,186	3,327	3,162	3,289	3,605	3,623	9,658	9,108
5713	Floor covering stores	960	914	1,058	951	1,027	1,043	1,042	1,136	1,104	1,030	1,122	1,047	1,052	2,932	2,624
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,398	4,179	4,529	4,396	4,140	4,323	4,299	4,306	4,669	4,474	4,604	5,205	7,263	13,106	12,817
5722	Household appliance stores	740	692	779	727	742	792	788	790	832	760	797	882	1,031	2,211	2,074
5731,34	Radio, TV and computer stores	3,658	3,487	3,750	3,669	3,398	3,531	3,511	3,516	3,837	3,714	3,807	4,323	6,232	10,895	10,743
5941	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	1,464	1,460	1,777	1,732	1,794	1,876	2,010	1,951	2,125	1,710	1,564	1,736	2,889	4,701	4,492
5942	Book stores	1,484	774	733	726	732	833	817	765	1,322	1,006	866	870	1,531	2,991	2,805
5944	Jewelry stores	1,074	1,457	1,244	1,298	1,341	1,746	1,393	1,363	1,466	1,324	1,455	1,835	4,478	3,775	3,742
	Nondurable goods, total	112,013	108,106	123,201	116,907	115,652	123,544	118,743	118,793	124,989	115,240	122,737	129,410	154,556	343,320	328,296
53	General merchandise group stores	20,783	21,355	25,474	23,358	23,479	25,904	24,866	23,695	26,416	23,819	25,978	31,075	44,935	67,612	62,625
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	15,994	16,588	20,090	18,141	18,311	20,098	19,211	18,265	20,640	18,611	20,183	24,614	36,188	52,672	48,266
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹	16,229	16,831	20,406	18,514	18,689	20,475	19,551	18,582	21,016	18,938	20,539	25,069	36,701	53,466	49,229
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including, leased depts.) ¹	3,124	3,665	4,416	4,203	4,117	4,455	4,030	3,726	4,636	4,323	4,540	5,786	9,334	11,205	10,663
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including, leased depts.) ¹	10,420	10,611	12,842	11,277	11,506	12,760	12,391	11,785	12,804	11,471	12,533	14,969	20,781	33,873	30,487
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including, leased depts.) ¹	2,685	2,555	3,148	3,034	3,066	3,260	3,130	3,071	3,576	3,144	3,466	4,314	6,586	8,388	8,079
533	Variety stores	545	621	740	635	641	705	651	646	699	616	710	776	1,218	1,906	1,659
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	4,244	4,146	4,644	4,582	4,527	5,101	5,004	4,784	5,077	4,592	5,085	5,685	7,529	13,034	12,700
54	Food group stores	35,132	32,328	36,233	34,982	34,031	36,348	35,310	36,289	36,716	34,096	35,498	35,880	38,008	103,693	101,142
541	Grocery stores	33,317	30,501	34,176	33,147	32,177	34,399	33,420	34,411	34,803	32,314	33,584	33,924	35,463	97,994	95,959
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	458	415	497	488	483	519	514	512	545	449	450	481	627	1,370	1,394
546	Retail bakeries	578	605	664	530	514	580	551	535	556	545	617	606	657	1,847	1,482
554	Gasoline service stations	12,529	11,723	12,920	12,454	12,887	14,039	13,642	13,629	13,795	12,724	13,264	12,807	12,990	37,172	35,190
56	Apparel & accessory stores	6,957	7,202	9,324	8,843	9,026	9,435	8,941	8,616	10,366	9,052	9,569	10,777	15,130	23,483	22,756
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings	751	686	808	756	765	826	806	701	809	791	843	977	1,514	2,245	2,139
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	2,030	2,136	2,677	2,597	2,732	2,967	2,765	2,453	2,764	2,638	2,805	3,048	4,406	6,843	6,760
562	Women's ready to wear	1,695	1,808	2,333	2,244	2,393	2,595	2,405	2,090	2,368	2,285	2,418	2,596	3,666	5,836	5,740
565	Family clothing stores	2,480	2,532	3,394	3,181	3,170	3,278	3,165	3,206	3,871	3,352	3,683	4,366	6,234	8,406	8,037
566	Shoe stores	1,161	1,299	1,717	1,591	1,680	1,706	1,592	1,566	2,009	1,511	1,494	1,606	2,017	4,177	4,004
58	Eating and drinking places	18,576	18,277	20,539	19,940	19,489	20,742	20,219	20,470	21,250	19,278	20,083	19,622	19,822	57,392	55,551
5812	Eating places	17,543	17,295	19,462	18,831	18,443	19,654	19,156	19,381	20,120	18,234	18,993	18,535	18,721	54,300	52,434
5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	9,840	9,721	10,794	10,437	10,171	10,693	10,327	10,583	11,198	10,100	10,454	10,352	10,182	30,355	29,129
5812 pt.	Refreshment places	7,270	7,236	8,318	8,011	7,838	8,428	8,349	8,381	8,476	7,634	8,009	7,721	8,021	22,824	22,342
5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	1,033	982	1,077	1,109	1,046	1,088	1,063	1,089	1,130	1,044	1,090	1,087	1,101	3,092	3,117
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,827	7,565	8,292	7,417	7,329	7,651	7,164	7,381	7,526	7,114	7,715	7,613	9,602	23,684	21,587
592	Liquor stores	1,702	1,620	1,844	1,811	1,772	1,927	1,927	2,002	2,032	1,757	1,837	1,970	2,525	5,166	5,101
596	Nonstore retailers ²	5,150	4,996	5,870	5,299	5,181	5,111	4,726	4,802	4,906	5,268	6,220	6,920	7,951	16,016	15,107
5961	Total mail order ³	3,804	3,432	4,261	3,763	3,645	3,582	3,296	3,440	3,508	3,731	4,491	5,223	6,203	11,497	10,893
598	Fuel dealers	2,181	1,633	1,360	1,570	1,156	910	726	751	775	922	1,228	1,405	1,887	5,174	5,521
53,56,57,594	GAF, total⁴	44,565	44,884	52,488	49,179	49,134	53,126	51,297	50,048	56,095	50,464	53,897	63,380	92,927	141,937	133,868
594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	6,435	6,394	6,761	6,361	6,486	7,148	6,983	7,051	7,987	6,872	7,139	9,045	17,254	19,590	18,325

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business—Con.

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997			1996										Total 3 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar. ^P	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1997	1996
	Adjusted⁵															
	Retail sales, total	210,233	213,022	212,965	201,685	202,375	203,865	202,789	203,291	203,036	204,713	206,277	205,789	206,894	636,220	600,484
	Total (excl. automotive group)	159,190	160,483	160,609	151,765	153,915	154,556	154,121	154,457	154,027	154,874	156,163	156,269	156,850	480,282	452,543
	Durable goods, total	85,344	87,786	87,500	82,641	81,580	83,011	82,394	82,531	82,487	83,091	83,871	83,485	83,785	260,630	244,212
52	Building materials group stores . . .	11,558	11,901	12,022	10,683	11,048	11,149	11,579	11,507	11,302	11,336	11,386	11,339	11,319	35,481	31,703
521.3	Building materials, supply stores . .	8,753	9,091	9,241	8,137	8,326	8,563	8,673	8,728	8,587	8,597	8,601	8,627	8,558	27,085	24,021
525	Hardware stores	1,327	1,295	1,279	1,239	1,283	1,268	1,275	1,264	1,244	1,244	1,279	1,266	1,299	3,901	3,737
55 ex 554	Automotive group	51,043	52,539	52,356	49,920	48,460	49,309	48,668	48,834	49,009	49,839	50,114	49,520	50,044	155,938	147,941
551.2,5 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	48,041	49,566	49,378	46,935	45,470	46,290	45,663	45,820	46,013	46,851	47,033	46,564	47,068	146,985	139,048
553	Auto & home supply stores	3,002	2,973	2,978	2,985	2,990	3,019	3,005	3,014	2,996	2,988	3,081	2,956	2,976	8,953	8,893
57	Furniture group stores	11,247	11,591	11,458	11,128	11,118	11,168	11,137	11,142	11,235	11,232	11,214	11,142	11,125	34,296	32,658
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,788	5,889	5,811	5,570	5,524	5,539	5,548	5,568	5,576	5,554	5,620	5,632	5,657	17,488	16,227
5722,31, 34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,615	4,826	4,762	4,637	4,673	4,704	4,673	4,675	4,759	4,811	4,727	4,647	4,600	14,203	13,710
	Nondurable goods, total	124,889	125,236	125,465	119,044	120,795	120,854	120,395	120,760	120,549	121,622	122,406	122,304	123,109	375,590	356,272
53	General merchandise group stores . . .	27,395	27,507	27,491	25,284	26,074	26,046	25,973	26,009	26,187	26,295	26,511	26,253	26,674	82,393	76,097
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) . .	21,497	21,599	21,625	19,591	20,391	20,342	20,243	20,249	20,415	20,565	20,722	20,461	21,064	64,721	59,217
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹ . .	21,695	21,947	22,106	20,102	20,539	20,727	20,567	20,644	20,808	20,896	21,016	20,936	21,382	65,748	60,249
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	4,814	4,861	4,853	4,604	4,657	4,621	4,585	4,566	4,622	4,658	4,676	4,581	4,760	14,528	13,694
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	13,291	13,552	13,720	12,100	12,425	12,559	12,554	12,631	12,728	12,760	12,828	12,893	13,029	40,563	36,413
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	3,590	3,534	3,533	3,398	3,457	3,547	3,428	3,447	3,458	3,478	3,512	3,462	3,593	10,657	10,142
533	Variety stores	735	789	768	680	681	683	696	714	705	689	714	702	711	2,292	2,011
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	5,163	5,119	5,098	5,013	5,002	5,021	5,034	5,046	5,067	5,041	5,075	5,090	4,899	15,380	14,869
54	Food group stores	35,838	35,841	36,056	34,823	35,092	34,966	35,053	35,367	35,148	35,633	35,691	35,627	35,761	107,735	104,408
541	Grocery stores	33,824	33,777	33,972	32,949	33,206	33,076	33,122	33,474	33,241	33,731	33,787	33,688	33,806	101,573	98,822
554	Gasoline service stations	13,429	13,352	13,279	12,747	13,057	13,307	12,980	12,773	12,750	12,827	13,004	13,082	13,242	40,060	37,488
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,678	9,709	9,616	9,322	9,565	9,582	9,561	9,471	9,482	9,585	9,522	9,344	9,402	29,003	28,137
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings. .	907	886	888	846	840	860	835	851	866	879	856	852	811	2,681	2,553
562.3	Women's clothing specialty stores . .	2,851	2,814	2,748	2,686	2,822	2,845	2,880	2,741	2,731	2,792	2,774	2,726	2,768	8,413	8,275
566	Shoe stores	1,601	1,700	1,641	1,588	1,645	1,636	1,611	1,626	1,602	1,553	1,573	1,555	1,584	4,942	4,765
58	Eating and drinking places	20,346	20,467	20,498	19,607	19,646	19,642	19,460	19,607	19,549	19,651	19,845	20,084	20,002	61,311	58,629
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,922	8,082	8,137	7,380	7,411	7,472	7,470	7,578	7,617	7,649	7,785	7,768	7,800	24,141	21,892
592	Liquor stores	1,932	1,952	1,943	1,902	1,901	1,902	1,912	1,908	1,928	1,877	1,882	1,892	1,910	5,827	5,703
5961	Total mail order ³	4,025	4,196	4,330	3,820	3,975	3,989	4,069	4,165	3,973	3,999	3,985	3,918	4,028	12,551	11,686
53,56 57,594	GAF, total⁴	56,404	57,079	56,721	53,444	54,451	54,532	54,473	54,500	54,867	54,975	55,188	54,793	55,305	170,204	159,633

^PPreliminary estimates.¹Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.²Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail order.³The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores). (See Appendix A.)⁵Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. (See Appendix C.)

Note: U.S. and group totals include data for kinds of business not shown. Measures of sampling variability are shown in Table B-1.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change			SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change		
		Mar. 1997 from		3 mos. 1997 from 3 mos. 1996			Mar. 1997 from		3 mos. 1997 from 3 mos. 1996
		Mar. 1996	Feb. 1997				Mar. 1996	Feb. 1997	
	Unadjusted				58	Eating and drinking places	+3.0	+12.4	+3.3
	Retail sales, total	+5.4	+14.5	+4.9	5812	Eating places	+3.4	+12.5	+3.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)	+5.8	+13.9	+5.1	5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	+3.4	+11.0	+4.2
	Durable goods, total	+5.4	+15.3	+5.3	5812 pt.	Refreshment places	+3.8	+15.0	+2.2
					5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	-2.9	+9.7	-8
52	Building materials group stores	+12.7	+24.2	+10.3	591	Drug & proprietary stores	+11.8	+9.6	+9.7
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	+12.7	+22.9	+10.0	592	Liquor stores	+1.8	+13.8	+1.3
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	+14.1	+23.8	+11.0	5943	Stationery stores*	+5.2	+6	+5.9
523	Paint, glass, wallpaper stores*	+8.2	+20.6	+4.5	596	Nonstore retailers ²	+10.8	+17.5	+6.0
525	Hardware stores	+3.1	+16.4	+3.3	5961	Total mail order ³	+13.2	+24.2	+5.5
55 ex					598	Fuel dealers	-13.4	-16.7	-6.3
554	Automotive group	+4.2	+16.4	+4.1	5992	Florist shops*	+21.7	-15.2	+12.6
551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	+4.4	+16.3	+4.4	53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	+6.7	+16.9	+6.0
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers	+3.1	+14.9	+3.6	594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	+6.3	+5.7	+6.9
551	Motor vehicle dealers, (franch.)	+3.4	+15.6	+3.3		Adjusted⁵			
553	Auto & home supply stores	-1	+17.7	-6		Retail sales, total	+5.6	.0	+6.0
57	Furniture group stores	+2.9	+10.0	+3.6		Total (excl. automotive group)	+5.8	+1	+6.1
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	+4.1	+11.3	+6.2		Durable goods, total	+5.9	-3	+6.7
5712	Furniture stores	+2.6	+7.7	+6.0	52	Building materials group stores	+12.5	+1.0	+11.9
5713	Floor covering stores	+11.3	+15.8	+11.7	521,3	Building materials, supply stores	+13.6	+1.6	+12.8
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	+3.0	+8.4	+2.3	525	Hardware stores	+3.2	-1.2	+4.4
5722	Household appliance stores	+7.2	+12.6	+6.6	55 ex				
5731,34	Radio, TV and computer stores	+2.2	+7.5	+1.4	554	Automotive group	+4.9	-3	+5.4
5735,6	Music stores*	-4.7	+10.5	-5.0	551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	+5.2	-4	+5.7
5941	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	+2.6	+21.7	+4.7	6,7,9	Auto & home supply stores	-2	+2	+7
5942	Book stores	+1.0	-5.3	+6.6	553				
5944	Jewelry stores	-4.2	-14.6	+9	57	Furniture group stores	+3.0	-1.1	+5.0
5946	Camera,photographic supply stores*	+9.3	+11.3	+9.4	571	Furniture & home furn. stores	+4.3	-1.3	+7.8
5999 pt.	Optical goods stores*	+8.9	+18.3	+6.9	5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	+2.7	-1.3	+3.6
	Nondurable goods, total	+5.4	+14.0	+4.6		Nondurable goods, total	+5.4	+2	+5.4
53	General merchandise group stores	+9.1	+19.3	+8.0	53	General merchandise group stores	+8.7	-1	+8.3
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	+10.7	+21.1	+9.1	531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	+10.4	+1	+9.3
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹	+10.2	+21.2	+8.6	531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹	+10.0	+7	+9.1
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+5.1	+20.5	+5.1	531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+5.4	-2	+6.1
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+13.9	+21.0	+11.1	531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+13.4	+1.2	+11.4
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+3.8	+23.2	+3.8	531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+4.0	.0	+5.1
533	Variety stores	+16.5	+19.2	+14.9	533	Variety stores	+12.9	-2.7	+14.0
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	+1.4	+12.0	+2.6	539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	+1.7	-4	+3.4
54	Food group stores	+3.6	+12.1	+2.5	54	Food group stores	+3.5	+6	+3.2
541	Grocery stores	+3.1	+12.0	+2.1	541	Grocery stores	+3.1	+6	+2.8
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	+1.8	+19.8	-1.7	554	Gasoline service stations	+4.2	-5	+6.9
543	Fruit stores & vegetable markets*	+6.4	+13.2	+5.7	56	Apparel & accessory stores	+3.2	-1.0	+3.1
544	Candy, nut, confectionery stores*	+39.2	+11.3	+17.0	561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings.	+5.0	+2	+5.0
546	Retail bakeries	+25.3	+9.8	+24.6	562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	+2.3	-2.3	+1.7
554	Gasoline service stations	+3.7	+10.2	+5.6	566	Shoe stores	+3.3	-3.5	+3.7
56	Apparel & accessory stores	+5.4	+29.5	+3.2	58	Eating and drinking places	+4.5	+2	+4.6
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings.	+6.9	+17.8	+5.0	591	Drug & proprietary stores	+10.3	+7	+10.3
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	+3.1	+25.3	+1.2	592	Liquor stores	+2.2	-5	+2.2
562	Women's ready to wear stores	+4.0	+29.0	+1.7	5961	Total mail order ³	+13.4	+3.2	+7.4
565	Family clothing stores	+6.7	+34.0	+4.6	53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	+6.1	-6	+6.6
566	Shoe stores	+7.9	+32.2	+4.3					

*See Appendix A, Percent Change.

¹Based on data for leased departments operated within department stores.²Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail order.³The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores). (See Appendix A.)⁵Based on data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not price changes.

Note: Measures of sampling variability for unadjusted data are shown in Table B-1.

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business: 1996

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail sales, total	197,714	201,085	201,685	202,375	203,865	202,789	203,291	203,036	204,713	206,277	205,789	206,894
	Total (excl. automotive group)	149,641	151,137	151,765	153,915	154,556	154,121	154,457	154,027	154,874	156,163	156,269	156,850
	Durable goods, total	79,640	81,931	82,641	81,580	83,011	82,394	82,531	82,487	83,091	83,871	83,485	83,785
52	Building materials group stores	10,440	10,580	10,683	11,048	11,149	11,579	11,507	11,302	11,336	11,386	11,339	11,319
521.3	Building materials, supply stores	7,890	7,994	8,137	8,326	8,563	8,673	8,728	8,587	8,597	8,601	8,627	8,558
525	Hardware stores	1,235	1,263	1,239	1,283	1,268	1,275	1,264	1,244	1,244	1,279	1,266	1,299
55 ex													
554	Automotive group	48,073	49,948	49,920	48,460	49,309	48,668	48,834	49,009	49,839	50,114	49,520	50,044
551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous												
6,7,9	automobile dealers	45,134	46,979	46,935	45,470	46,290	45,663	45,820	46,013	46,851	47,033	46,564	47,068
553	Auto & home supply stores	2,939	2,969	2,985	2,990	3,019	3,005	3,014	2,996	2,988	3,081	2,956	2,976
57	Furniture group stores	10,709	10,821	11,128	11,118	11,168	11,137	11,142	11,235	11,232	11,214	11,142	11,125
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,270	5,387	5,570	5,524	5,539	5,548	5,568	5,576	5,554	5,620	5,632	5,657
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,549	4,524	4,637	4,673	4,704	4,673	4,675	4,759	4,811	4,727	4,647	4,600
	Nondurable goods, total	118,074	119,154	119,044	120,795	120,854	120,395	120,760	120,549	121,622	122,406	122,304	123,109
53	General merchandise group stores	25,225	25,588	25,284	26,074	26,046	25,973	26,009	26,187	26,295	26,511	26,253	26,674
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	19,681	19,945	19,591	20,391	20,342	20,243	20,249	20,415	20,565	20,722	20,461	21,064
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ²	19,870	20,277	20,102	20,539	20,727	20,567	20,644	20,808	20,896	21,016	20,936	21,382
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ²	4,449	4,641	4,604	4,657	4,621	4,585	4,566	4,622	4,658	4,676	4,581	4,760
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ²	12,092	12,221	12,100	12,425	12,559	12,554	12,631	12,728	12,760	12,828	12,893	13,029
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ²	3,329	3,415	3,398	3,457	3,547	3,428	3,447	3,458	3,478	3,512	3,462	3,593
533	Variety stores	658	673	680	681	683	696	714	705	689	714	702	711
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	4,886	4,970	5,013	5,002	5,021	5,034	5,046	5,067	5,041	5,075	5,090	4,899
54	Food group stores	34,882	34,703	34,823	35,092	34,966	35,053	35,367	35,148	35,633	35,691	35,627	35,761
541	Grocery stores	33,020	32,853	32,949	33,206	33,076	33,122	33,474	33,241	33,731	33,787	33,688	33,806
554	Gasoline service stations	12,353	12,388	12,747	13,057	13,307	12,980	12,773	12,750	12,827	13,004	13,082	13,242
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,230	9,585	9,322	9,565	9,582	9,561	9,471	9,482	9,585	9,522	9,344	9,402
561	Mens & boys' clothing, furnishings.	843	864	846	840	860	835	851	866	879	856	852	811
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	2,732	2,857	2,686	2,822	2,845	2,880	2,741	2,731	2,792	2,774	2,726	2,768
566	Shoe stores	1,577	1,600	1,588	1,645	1,636	1,611	1,626	1,602	1,553	1,573	1,555	1,584
58	Eating and drinking places	19,360	19,662	19,607	19,646	19,642	19,460	19,607	19,549	19,651	19,845	20,084	20,002
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,184	7,328	7,380	7,411	7,472	7,470	7,578	7,617	7,649	7,785	7,768	7,800
592	Liquor stores	1,912	1,889	1,902	1,901	1,902	1,912	1,908	1,928	1,877	1,882	1,892	1,910
5961	Total mail order ³	3,885	3,981	3,820	3,975	3,989	4,069	4,165	3,973	3,999	3,985	3,918	4,028
53;56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	52,677	53,512	53,444	54,451	54,532	54,473	54,500	54,867	54,975	55,188	54,793	55,305

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. (See Appendix C.)

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

³The sales estimates for "total mail order," SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.

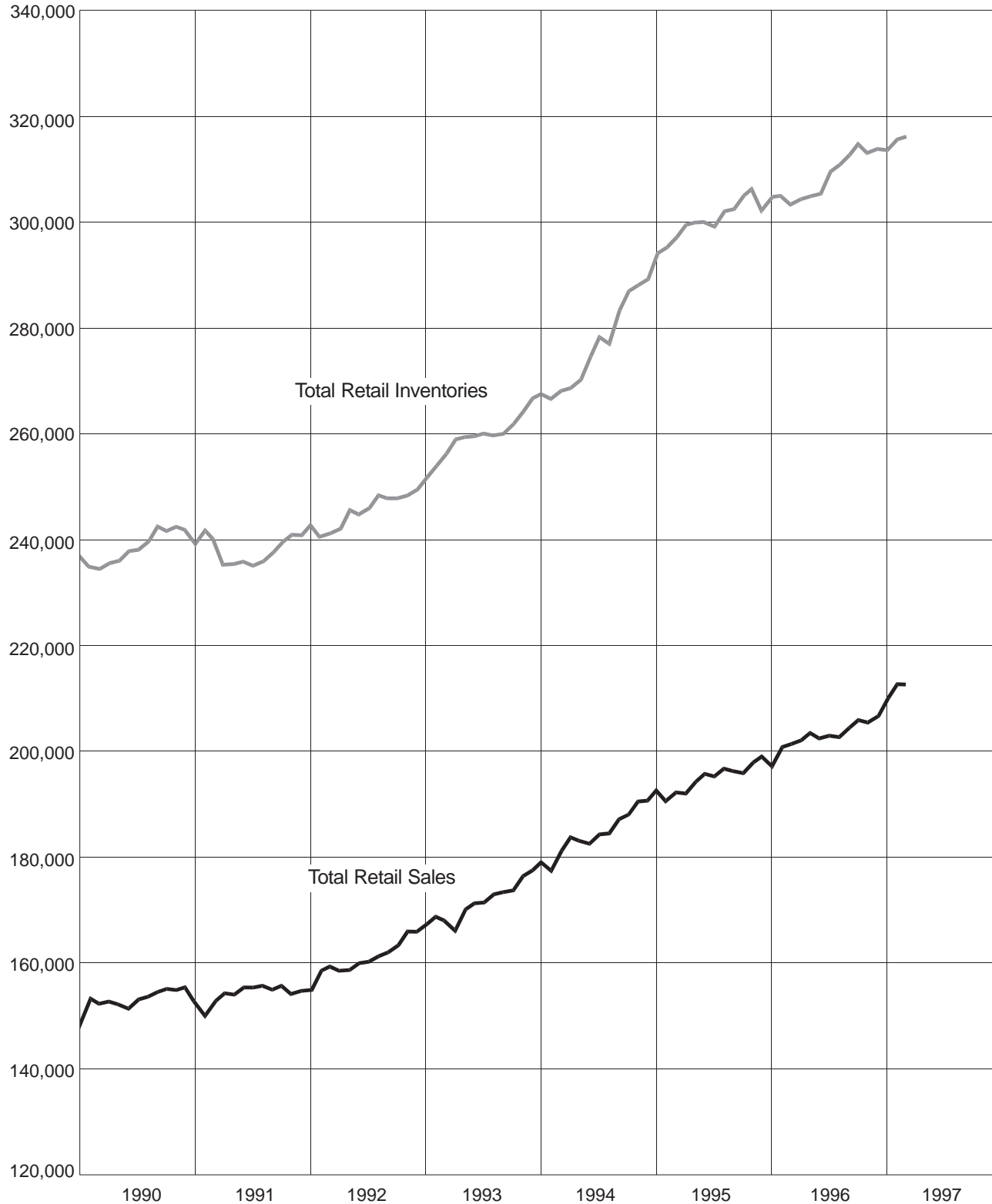
⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. (See Appendix A.)

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown.

Figure 3.
Estimated Monthly Retail Sales and End-of-Month Inventories:
January 1990 – March 1997

(Seasonally adjusted, but not adjusted for price changes)

Millions of dollars



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Monthly Retail Trade.

Table 4. Estimated End-of-Month Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997			1996										Percent change Mar. 1997 from	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar. ^P	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Mar. 1996	Feb. 1997
	Unadjusted															
	Retail Inventories, total	305,201	311,146	315,272	302,771	304,538	303,736	300,383	300,137	303,023	313,263	333,919	338,080	309,184	+4.1	+1.3
	Total (excl. automotive group)	215,489	218,891	222,324	214,866	217,355	216,410	214,066	218,851	222,555	230,960	247,489	249,835	218,332	+3.5	+1.6
	Durable goods, total	164,287	168,340	171,028	161,773	162,959	163,110	161,280	157,004	157,087	161,115	171,129	173,277	166,527	+5.7	+1.6
52	Building materials group stores	21,738	22,383	23,478	22,100	22,399	22,478	22,365	22,045	21,550	21,547	21,882	21,835	21,776	+6.2	+4.9
55 ex	Automotive group	89,712	92,255	92,948	87,905	87,183	87,326	86,317	81,286	80,468	82,303	86,430	88,245	90,852	+5.7	+8
54	Furniture group stores	22,132	21,853	21,916	22,488	23,013	22,929	22,438	22,582	23,125	24,173	26,261	26,157	22,525	-2.5	+3
57	Nondurable goods, total	140,914	142,806	144,244	140,998	141,579	140,626	139,103	143,133	145,936	152,148	162,790	164,803	142,657	+2.3	+1.0
53	General merchandise group stores	53,533	55,108	56,003	56,102	56,541	56,156	55,332	56,792	58,718	62,677	68,354	69,654	54,596	-.2	+1.6
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	43,489	45,003	46,005	45,081	45,488	45,158	44,452	45,599	47,359	50,463	55,131	56,509	44,222	+2.0	+2.2
54	Food group stores	28,825	28,257	28,443	27,416	27,519	27,382	27,262	27,471	27,374	27,932	29,284	30,002	29,435	+3.7	+7
56	Apparel & accessory stores	21,418	22,683	23,359	23,357	22,875	22,341	22,130	23,449	24,246	24,946	26,801	27,240	21,786	.0	+3.0
	Adjusted¹															
	Retail Inventories, total	313,980	315,938	316,507	303,737	304,656	305,214	305,677	309,786	311,112	312,969	315,281	313,490	314,183	+4.2	+2
	Total (excl. automotive group)	226,501	227,566	227,655	219,797	220,983	220,991	220,811	223,436	223,229	223,850	225,918	225,795	226,132	+3.6	.0
	Durable goods, total	165,441	167,380	168,564	159,306	160,029	160,631	161,138	163,433	164,862	166,530	168,146	165,865	165,997	+5.8	+7
52	Building materials group stores	22,433	22,564	22,728	21,394	21,496	21,531	21,926	22,045	21,834	22,077	22,170	22,281	22,542	+6.2	+7
55 ex	Automotive group	87,479	88,372	88,852	83,940	83,673	84,223	84,866	86,350	87,883	89,119	89,363	87,695	88,051	+5.9	+5
54	Furniture group stores	22,864	22,883	22,829	23,376	23,749	23,785	23,349	23,696	23,549	23,423	23,680	22,965	22,413	-2.3	-2
57	Nondurable goods, total	148,539	148,558	147,943	144,431	144,627	144,583	144,539	146,353	146,250	146,439	147,135	147,625	148,186	+2.4	-4
53	General merchandise group stores	58,315	58,388	57,936	57,932	58,037	57,940	58,247	58,877	59,167	59,164	59,185	59,208	58,823	.0	-8
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	47,374	47,522	47,575	46,523	46,654	46,555	46,890	47,302	47,693	47,652	47,815	48,011	47,704	+2.3	+1
54	Food group stores	28,690	28,580	28,600	27,569	27,777	27,814	27,625	27,964	28,085	28,182	28,482	28,677	28,701	+3.7	+1
56	Apparel & accessory stores	24,038	24,054	23,933	23,907	23,271	23,175	23,295	23,379	23,403	23,336	23,592	23,937	23,914	+1	-5

^PPreliminary estimates (Appendix B, Table B-4 contains measures of revisions to preliminary estimates).¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. (See Appendix C.)

Note: U.S. and group totals include data for kinds of business not shown. Measures of sampling variability are shown in Table B-2.

Table 5. Inventories/Sales Ratios

SIC code	Kind of business	1997			1996									
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar. ^P	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Unadjusted													
	Retail trade, total	1.64	1.70	1.50	1.52	1.53	1.42	1.47	1.47	1.43	1.60	1.61	1.61	1.26
	Total (excl. automotive group) . . .	1.53	1.61	1.43	1.47	1.47	1.36	1.40	1.43	1.39	1.57	1.58	1.52	1.09
	Durable goods, total	2.22	2.23	1.97	1.96	1.96	1.81	1.88	1.83	1.80	2.00	2.02	2.14	1.85
	Building materials group stores	2.45	2.52	2.13	2.26	1.88	1.68	1.73	1.73	1.75	1.85	1.78	2.00	2.10
52	Automotive group	1.97	1.95	1.69	1.67	1.70	1.59	1.66	1.56	1.54	1.70	1.69	1.95	2.09
55 ex	Furniture group stores	2.13	2.20	2.01	2.12	2.27	2.16	2.14	2.11	2.04	2.25	2.34	2.10	1.44
554														
57														
	Nondurable goods, total	1.26	1.32	1.17	1.21	1.22	1.14	1.17	1.20	1.17	1.32	1.33	1.27	.92
53	General merchandise group stores	2.58	2.58	2.20	2.40	2.41	2.17	2.23	2.40	2.22	2.63	2.63	2.24	1.21
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.72	2.71	2.29	2.49	2.48	2.25	2.31	2.50	2.29	2.71	2.73	2.30	1.22
54	Food group stores82	.87	.79	.78	.81	.75	.77	.76	.75	.82	.82	.84	.77
56	Apparel & accessory stores	3.08	3.15	2.51	2.64	2.53	2.37	2.48	2.72	2.34	2.76	2.80	2.53	1.44
	Adjusted¹													
	Retail trade, total	1.49	1.48	1.49	1.51	1.51	1.50	1.51	1.52	1.53	1.53	1.53	1.52	1.52
	Total (excl. automotive group) . . .	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.45	1.44	1.43	1.43	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.44	1.44
	Durable goods, total	1.94	1.91	1.93	1.93	1.96	1.94	1.96	1.98	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.99	1.98
	Building materials group stores	1.94	1.90	1.89	2.00	1.95	1.93	1.89	1.92	1.93	1.95	1.95	1.96	1.99
52	Automotive group	1.71	1.68	1.70	1.68	1.73	1.71	1.74	1.77	1.79	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.76
55 ex	Furniture group stores	2.03	1.97	1.99	2.10	2.14	2.13	2.10	2.13	2.10	2.09	2.11	2.06	2.01
554														
57														
	Nondurable goods, total	1.19	1.19	1.18	1.21	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.21	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.20
53	General merchandise group stores	2.13	2.12	2.11	2.29	2.23	2.22	2.24	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.23	2.26	2.21
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.37	2.29	2.29	2.32	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.31	2.35	2.26
54	Food group stores80	.80	.79	.79	.79	.80	.79	.79	.80	.79	.80	.80	.80
56	Apparel & accessory stores	2.48	2.48	2.49	2.56	2.43	2.42	2.44	2.47	2.47	2.43	2.48	2.56	2.54

^PPreliminary estimates.¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes.

Table 6. Estimated End-of-Month Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business: 1996

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail Inventories, total	305,094	305,336	303,737	304,656	305,214	305,677	309,786	311,112	312,969	315,281	313,490	314,183
	Total (excl. automotive group)	218,642	219,292	219,797	220,983	220,991	220,811	223,436	223,229	223,850	225,918	225,795	226,132
	Durable goods, total	160,493	160,667	159,306	160,029	160,631	161,138	163,433	164,862	166,530	168,146	165,865	165,997
	Building materials group stores	21,089	21,176	21,394	21,496	21,531	21,926	22,045	21,834	22,077	22,170	22,281	22,542
52	Automotive group	86,452	86,044	83,940	83,673	84,223	84,866	86,350	87,883	89,119	89,363	87,695	88,051
55 ex	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	22,976	23,391	23,376	23,749	23,785	23,349	23,696	23,549	23,423	23,680	22,965	22,413
554													
57													
	Nondurable goods, total	144,601	144,669	144,431	144,627	144,583	144,539	146,353	146,250	146,439	147,135	147,625	148,186
53	General merchandise group stores	58,256	57,931	57,932	58,037	57,940	58,247	58,877	59,167	59,164	59,185	59,208	58,823
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	46,333	46,323	46,523	46,654	46,555	46,890	47,302	47,693	47,652	47,815	48,011	47,704
54	Food group stores	27,440	27,536	27,569	27,777	27,814	27,625	27,964	28,085	28,182	28,482	28,677	28,701
56	Apparel & accessory stores	23,906	23,832	23,907	23,271	23,175	23,295	23,379	23,403	23,336	23,592	23,937	23,914

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. (See Appendix C.)

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown.

Table 7. Inventories/Sales Ratios by Kinds of Business: 1996

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail trade, total	1.54	1.52	1.51	1.51	1.50	1.51	1.52	1.53	1.53	1.53	1.52	1.52
	Total (excl. automotive group)	1.46	1.45	1.45	1.44	1.43	1.43	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.44	1.44
	Durable goods, total	2.02	1.96	1.93	1.96	1.94	1.96	1.98	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.99	1.98
	Building materials group stores	2.02	2.00	2.00	1.95	1.93	1.89	1.92	1.93	1.95	1.95	1.96	1.99
52	Automotive group	1.80	1.72	1.68	1.73	1.71	1.74	1.77	1.79	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.76
55 ex	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.15	2.16	2.10	2.14	2.13	2.10	2.13	2.10	2.09	2.11	2.06	2.01
554													
57													
	Nondurable goods, total	1.22	1.21	1.21	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.21	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.20
53	General merchandise group stores	2.31	2.26	2.29	2.23	2.22	2.24	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.23	2.26	2.21
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.35	2.32	2.37	2.29	2.29	2.32	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.31	2.35	2.26
54	Food group stores	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.80	0.79	0.79	0.80	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.80
56	Apparel & accessory stores	2.59	2.49	2.56	2.43	2.42	2.44	2.47	2.47	2.43	2.48	2.56	2.54

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes.

Appendix A.

Explanatory Material

INTRODUCTION

The Monthly Retail Trade report is produced by the Bureau of the Census to provide (1) estimates of sales of retail stores by kind of business for the United States (2) national estimates of end-of-month inventories of retail establishments by kind of business. The retail sales and inventories estimates in this report are developed from samples representing all sizes of firms and kinds of business in retail trade throughout the nation. The samples have been designed so that estimates can be evaluated in terms of their sampling variability. Effective with the August 1993 report, a benchmarking operation, described below, accounted for the sales and inventories estimates for the new employers and nonemployers formerly represented by an area sample.

DESCRIPTION OF SALES AND INVENTORIES SAMPLES

Sales Sample

Monthly retail sales estimates are based on a probability sample selected from the retail employers (Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 52-59) contained in the Census Bureau's Standard Statistical Establishment List (SSEL). The SSEL includes employers who make social security payments for their employees under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA).

The list sample originally was drawn from the SSEL as updated to December 31, 1989. The initial SSEL consisted of two lists. The first list was made up of all employer identification (EIN) numbers (assigned in connection with FICA) with reported payroll in at least one quarter of 1989. The second list consisted of all establishments of known multiestablishment companies as of December 31, 1989. These lists contained information on sales/receipts, payroll, employment, name and address, kind-of-business classification, etc. Before the sampling frame was available, a study was made of the universe of retail businesses using files from the 1987 Census of Retail Trade. This study determined the stratification of the sampling units based on 1987 sales and kind of business, and also determined the optimal allocation of the sample necessary to meet specified sampling variability objectives for sales estimates for different kind-of-business groups. The primary stratum boundary determined in the study was the

certainty cutoff to be used for each kind of business. The cutoff, which ranged from annual sales of \$2.5 million to annual sales of \$100 million, was particularly important since it also determined the type of sampling unit.

Sampling units for the list sample consisted of both companies and EINs. For an EIN to be eligible for the initial list sample, the EIN had to be active, (i.e., had payroll in 1989 and was on the latest available Internal Revenue Service (IRS) mailing list for FICA taxpayers). If a known company had total retail sales (on a 1987 basis) above the cutoff for its major kind of business, the company was selected for the sample with certainty (i.e., probability = 1.0). The company, which might consist of two or more EINs, was then the sampling unit; therefore, any new retail establishments that the company might acquire, even if under new or different EINs, were in the sample with certainty. Single-establishment companies, whether or not selected with certainty, were considered as EIN sampling units.

All retail companies not selected with certainty were treated on an EIN basis; that is, the EIN was the sampling unit. The EINs were stratified according to their major kind of business and their estimated sales (on a 1987 basis). Within each stratum, a simple random sample of EINs was selected. The sampling rates for these EINs varied between 1 in 3 and 1 in 1,000.

For all EIN 'births' after the initial selection, a two-phase selection procedure was used. EIN births are new EINs recently assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), with a kind-of-business classification assigned by the Social Security Administration (SSA), and currently on the IRS mailing list for FICA taxpayers. In the first phase, births were stratified by kind of business and size (expected employment or quarterly payroll). A relatively large sample was drawn and canvassed for a more reliable measure of size (sales/receipts in 2 recent months) and a more detailed kind-of-business code, if needed.

Using this more reliable information, the births selected in the first phase were subjected to probability-proportional-to-size sampling with overall probabilities equivalent to those used in drawing the initial sample from the 1989 SSEL. Because of the lag in reporting births to the IRS and the SSA and the time needed to accomplish the two-phase birth-selection procedure carried out quarterly, births were actually added to the list sample approximately 9 months after they began operation. During this 9 month period, the

reports from the existing list sample retailers accounted for the period-to-period changes, while benchmarking adjusted the levels to be consistent with the prior annual survey.

To be eligible for list sample canvass and tabulation in a given month, a retail noncertainty business must meet both of the following requirements:

1. It must be on the latest available IRS mailing list for the FICA taxpayers.
2. It must have been selected from either the SSEL or the file of employer births. For this purpose, a universe file of all retail businesses ever given a chance for selection is maintained. This file shows, among other things, which EINs actually have been selected.

For businesses selected into the sample with certainty, the first requirement is changed. These certainty sampling units are not dropped from canvass and tabulation if they are no longer on the IRS mailing list. Rather, these businesses are contacted, and if there are successor businesses, they are added to the survey. This is a tighter form of control used for these larger businesses.

The list sample is updated quarterly to account for business births and deaths and represents approximately 96 percent of retail sales. Canvass of this component is primarily by mail. Recent EIN births and nonemployers, not accounted for by the list sample, represent the balance of retail sales. The benchmarking procedure adds this component to the list sample estimates to yield the total retail estimates.

Inventory Sample

The list sample portion of the inventory sample is a subsample of the EINs and companies included in the monthly retail sales survey. Benchmarking also accounted for the inventories of recent EIN births and nonemployers.

Studies similar to those performed for the sales sample were conducted prior to selecting the inventory sample. Those studies determined the stratification (based on sales from the 1987 Census of Retail Trade), allocation (based on inventory from the 1987 Annual Retail Trade Survey), and certainty cutoffs required to meet desired inventory sampling variability constraints for various kind-of-business groups.

The initial inventory list sample was selected from the initial sales list sample by first stratifying EINs and companies by kind-of-business groups and estimated sales (on a 1987 basis). To meet reliability constraints, the required number of cases in each size stratum were then selected on a probability-proportional-to-size basis. Some companies and EINs because of their relatively large impact on the inventory estimates, were selected with certainty in order to reduce the sampling variability associated with the estimates.

After the initial inventory sample selection, all births selected into the sales sample were subjected to probability-proportional-to-size sampling with overall probabilities equivalent to those used in drawing the initial inventory sample.

BENCHMARKING

Retail sales in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking operation that developed revised monthly sales estimates for the period January 1987 through December 1992. The benchmarking process equated the 12-month sum of the estimates for each of the years 1987 through 1991 to the annual sales estimate derived from the 1987 census of Retail Trade and the Annual Retail Trade Surveys. The benchmarking process also minimized the differences between the month-to-month trends of the estimates from the original and the revised series. We derived the original series estimates by using the composite estimation procedures described below under *estimation procedures*.

We revised the end-of-month inventory estimates for the period January 1988 through December 1992. The benchmarking process equated the 1988 through 1991 December estimates to the end-of-year inventory estimates derived from the Annual Retail Trade Surveys. The process also minimized changes to the month-to-month trends of the original inventory series. We derived the original inventory estimates using the composite estimation procedures.

We derived carry-forward factors for sales and inventories by dividing the revised December 1991 estimates by the original composite estimates for December 1991. Through the use of these carry-forward factors, the effects of the revision process were applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1991. These factors were derived at the most detailed kind-of-business levels. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate detail level estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Starting with the July 1993 final and August 1993 preliminary estimates, the carry-forward factors were adjusted to include a component representing EIN birth employers and nonemployers. This adjustment was approximately 4 percent of the total retail sales estimate, although it varies by kind of business.

ESTIMATION PROCEDURES

Rotating sample panels are used for the sales and inventory samples (except for very large retail businesses which are selected with certainty and canvassed each month). For sampling units in the rotating panels, 2 months of data are obtained at each enumeration. For example, February list sample rotating panel cases report data for February (the current month) and January (the previous month). In the following month, different rotating panels (the March panels) report figures for March and February.

Three list sample panels are used. This permits the use of a composite estimation procedure that provides estimates more reliable than those that would be obtained from a completely fixed sample of about twice the size and also reduces the reporting burden for selected businesses.

The first estimate issued each month, based on the full sample, is called the preliminary estimate. The preliminary composite estimate for the current month at each three-digit SIC level for sales and at each major kind-of-business grouping for inventory is a weighted average of two estimates: (1) the current month unbiased estimate (weight 0.25) and (2) a ratio estimate (weight 0.75) obtained by multiplying the current-to-previous month ratios developed from the current month report forms by the preliminary composite estimate for the previous month.

A final estimate is developed 1 month later using information available from the following month's enumeration. The final composite estimate for individual kind-of-business levels is also a weighted average of two estimates – the preliminary composite estimate for a given month (weight 0.8) and the unbiased estimate (weight 0.2) for the same month as obtained from the next month's reporting panel. The aggregate level estimates are obtained by adding the individual kind-of-business components.

The preliminary composite estimates provide a measure of the dollar volume level that is considerably more reliable than the unbiased estimates, and the final composite estimates are generally more reliable than the preliminary composite estimates. The most reliable indication of month-to-month trend is the ratio of the current month's preliminary composite estimate divided by the previous month's final composite estimate. This is true because the numerator and denominator of this ratio are more highly correlated than would be the case if the numerator and denominator were two preliminary or two final estimates. The preliminary-final ratio, therefore, has less sampling variability than one based on two preliminary or two final estimates.

Another advantage gained by using the rotating panel system is that the very large non-certainty cases in each enumeration are identified and recanvassed in the following month or months. This makes it possible to reduce their weights without biasing the results and thus lessen their influence on the estimates. This increases the reliability of the estimates, particularly the measure of month-to-month change.

Percent Change

Month-to-month and year-to-year comparisons for sales and inventory shown in this report are based on the total dollar volume of receipts or value of inventory for each of the periods being compared. These trends thus include the effect of stores starting operation or ceasing operation and are not limited to "identical stores," i.e., those in operation in both of the periods being compared.

The percent changes shown in Table 2 for sales for kinds of business not marked with an asterisk are derived directly from the dollar volume estimates in Table 1. The sampling variability of dollar estimates for those kinds of business with an asterisk is relatively large. Therefore, such estimates are not published in Table 1 for sales. However, the sampling variability of the percent changes derived from such estimates are relatively small and are, therefore, published in Table 2 for sales.

Unpublished Data

Selected additional data, such as dollar volume estimates for some kinds of business not separately shown in this report, are produced as a byproduct of the regularly published statistics. These additional data have not been included in this publication because of high imputation or sampling variability (relative to the changes from month to month or between other periods), so as to make them potentially misleading. For a fee, the Bureau of the Census will release such figures for individual use, though not for publication. It should be noted that some unpublished figures can be derived directly from this report by subtracting published data from their respective totals. However, the figures obtained by such subtraction would be subject to the high imputation rates or high sampling variability described previously for unpublished kinds of business.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at retail and wholesale by establishments primarily engaged in retail trade; amounts received from customers for layaway purchases; receipts from rental or leasing of vehicles, equipment, instruments, tools, etc; receipts for delivery, installation, maintenance, repair, alteration, storage, and other services; and receipts from gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer or wholesaler and passed along to the retailer. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Trade-in allowances and manufacturers' rebates are not deducted from total sales, however, rebates offered by the retailer are deducted. Total sales do not include commissions from vending machine operators or nonoperating income from such sources as investments and rental or sales of real estate.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

The sales figures represent total sales and receipts of all establishments primarily engaged in retail trade. They do not include sales at retail by manufacturers, wholesalers, service establishments, and others whose primary activity is other than retail trade.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks of merchandise, valued at cost, on hand for sale by retail establishments at the end of the month. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firms. However, the estimates provided are on a non-LIFO basis. Inventories are shown for retail stores and warehouses combined. Only those warehouses which maintain supplies of merchandise primarily intended for distribution to retail stores within the organization are included. Inventories exclude the value of fixtures, furnishings, equipment, and supplies used in store and warehouse operations and not held for resale.

Inventories-Sales Ratios. The inventories-sales ratios indicate the relationship of end-of-month inventories to sales during the month. The ratios shown are derived by dividing the inventories estimates by the corresponding sales estimates. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from one kind of business to another.

Kind-of-Business Classifications. Retail trade, defined as major groups 52 through 59 of the SIC Manual, includes establishments engaged in selling merchandise for personal or household consumption and rendering services incidental to the sale of the goods. Exceptions to this general rule are made necessary by trade practices. For example, lumber yards and paint, glass, and wallpaper stores are included in retail trade if they sell to the general public, even if a higher proportion of their sales is made to contractors. Also, establishments engaged in selling products such as typewriters, stationery, or gasoline to the general public are classified in retail trade, even though such products may not be used for personal or household consumption. However, even within these areas of exception to the general rule, establishments that sell exclusively

to business establishments, institutional and industrial users, or contractors are classified in wholesale trade.

Additional characteristics of retail trade establishments are that they usually operate at fixed places of business; they are engaged in activities to attract the general public to buy; they buy or receive merchandise as well as sell; they may process their products, but such processing is incidental or subordinate to selling; and they are considered as retail in the trade. Not all of these characteristics need be present, and some are modified by trade practice.

Kind-of-business classifications are not interchangeable with commodity classifications. Most businesses sell several kinds of commodities. The kind-of-business code assigned generally reflects the individual commodity, the commodity group which is the primary source of the establishment's receipts, or some mixture of commodities which characterizes the establishment's business. Classification of establishments by kind of business generally does not make it possible to determine either the number of establishments handling a particular commodity or the sales of that commodity. For example, the food group classification excludes stores selling food if the sale of food is not the primary source of receipts; moreover, even though stores are classified as food stores, some of their receipts may be derived from the sales of nonfood products.

GAF. General merchandise, apparel, and furniture (GAF) includes the following: General merchandise group stores (SIC 53); apparel and accessory stores (SIC 56); furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores (SIC 57); and miscellaneous shopping goods stores (SIC 594). GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

A description of each kind of business included in the accompanying statistical data is shown in Appendix D.

Appendix B.

Reliability of Data

An estimate based on a sample survey will differ from the population value because of sampling variability and nonsampling error. Sampling variability occurs because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the reporting, collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling variability and nonsampling errors.

Measures of Sampling Variability

The particular sample used in these surveys is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. Estimates derived from the different samples would differ from each other. The average of these estimates would be close to the estimate derived from a complete enumeration of the population. This assumes that a complete enumeration has the same nonsampling error as the sample survey. For sales and inventories, the average of the estimates differs from a complete census because of the composite estimation technique. Disregarding this difference, the standard error of the estimate is a measure of the variability among the estimates from all possible samples of the same size and design and, thus is a measure of the precision with which an estimate from a particular sample approximates the results of a complete enumeration.

The coefficient of variation (expressed as a percent) is the standard error of the estimate times 100 divided by the value being estimated. Note that the coefficients of variation are estimates derived from the sample and are also subject to sampling variability. Tables B-1 and B-2 give the estimates of coefficients of variation in percent for recent monthly dollar-volume sales and inventory estimates prepared by the Bureau of the Census and shown in this report.

The coefficients of variation presented in the tables permit certain confidence statements about the sample estimates. As noted before, the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about 2 out of 3 (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability tables. In about 9 out of 10 (90 percent) of these samples, the estimates would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than 1.65 times the percentage shown. In about 19 out of 20 (95

percent) of these samples, the estimates would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentage shown.

To illustrate the computations involved in the above confidence statements, as related to dollar volume sales estimates, assume that an estimate of sales published in Table 1 is \$10,750 million for a particular month and that the median coefficient of variation for this estimate, as given in Table B-1, is 1.8 percent, or 0.018. Multiplying \$10,750 million by 0.018 yields 194 million. Therefore, a 67-percent confidence interval is \$10,556 million to \$10,944 million (\$10,750 million plus or minus \$194 million). If corresponding confidence intervals were constructed for all possible samples of the same size and design, approximately 2 out of 3 (67 percent) of these intervals would contain the figure obtained from a complete enumeration. Typical practice is to construct 90- or 95-percent confidence intervals. Continuing with the illustration, a 90-percent confidence interval using $1.65 \times 0.018 \times 10,750$ million to yield 320 million). A 95-percent confidence interval is \$10,362 million to \$11,138 million (\$10,750 million plus or minus \$388 million).

All comparisons appearing on the front page of this publication and for which measures of sampling variability are available are accompanied by an indication of the 90-percent confidence interval. Thus, a statement such as “+ .8 (+ or -1.3)” indicates a 90-percent confidence interval from -0.5 to + 2.1. If the confidence interval contains zero, it is uncertain whether there is an increase or decrease.

Nonsampling Errors

As calculated for this report, the coefficient of variation measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimates and the true value being estimated. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources: (1) inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, (2) response errors, (3) definitional difficulties, (4) differences in the interpretation of questions, (5) mistakes in recording or coding the data obtained, and (6) other errors of collection, response, coverage, and estimation of missing data. These non-sampling errors also occur in complete censuses. Although no direct measures of the biases have been obtained, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the collection, processing, and

tabulation of the data in an effort to minimize their influence. Coverage error has an effect on the accuracy of estimates for this survey to the extent that the administrative records system, which forms the basis of our survey universe frame, does not contain all legal businesses.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed sales amount to about 23 percent of the national sales estimates.

Table B-1. Estimated Coefficients of Variation in Percent for Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

[Based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, or trading-day differences]

SIC code	Kind of business	Preliminary estimates		Final estimates		Ratio of 2 consecutive months ¹		Ratio to same month a year ago ²
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Median
	Retail sales, total	0.8-1.0	0.9	0.8-0.9	0.9	0.2-0.5	0.3	0.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.9-1.1	1.0	0.9-1.0	1.0	0.1-0.4	0.2	0.3
	Durable goods, total	1.0-1.2	1.1	1.1-1.2	1.1	0.5-0.8	0.6	0.9
52	Building materials group stores	2.7-3.7	3.2	3.0-3.5	3.2	0.4-1.4	1.0	1.4
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	3.3-4.2	3.6	3.3-4.0	3.5	0.4-1.2	0.6	1.2
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	3.2-4.3	3.5	3.3-4.0	3.5	0.5-1.3	0.7	1.3
523	Paint, glass, wallpaper stores*	3.6-6.3	5.3	3.6-5.8	4.8	1.2-2.0	1.4	3.7
525	Hardware stores	4.2-5.8	5.1	4.4-5.8	4.8	0.9-2.1	1.3	2.6
55 ex	Automotive group	1.5-2.0	1.6	1.5-1.7	1.6	0.6-1.2	0.8	1.3
554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile							
551,2,5 6,7,9	dealers	1.7-2.2	1.9	1.7-1.9	1.8	0.7-1.4	0.9	1.4
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers	1.4-2.1	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.7-1.3	1.0	1.5
551	Motor vehicle dealers, (franch.)	1.4-2.1	1.6	1.5-1.7	1.6	0.7-1.3	0.9	1.6
553	Auto & home supply stores	3.7-4.6	4.0	3.1-4.2	3.8	0.8-1.2	0.9	2.9
57	Furniture group stores	1.4-2.1	1.6	1.3-1.9	1.5	0.5-1.3	0.6	1.2
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	3.2-4.6	3.5	3.0-4.2	3.5	0.9-2.9	1.1	1.6
5712	Furniture stores	4.1-5.7	4.5	3.9-5.2	4.5	0.5-1.8	1.0	2.0
5713	Floor covering stores	5.6-8.3	7.2	6.2-8.0	6.6	1.8-4.5	2.0	4.4
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer							
5722	stores	1.2-2.3	2.0	1.3-2.2	1.8	0.5-1.2	0.7	1.3
5731,34	Household appliance stores	3.4-4.5	3.8	3.3-4.4	3.8	0.6-1.7	1.3	2.6
5735,36	Radio, TV and computer stores	1.6-2.6	2.4	1.6-2.5	2.2	0.6-1.4	0.8	1.5
5941	Music stores*	7.3-10.0	8.8	7.4-9.8	9.0	0.8-2.7	2.3	3.2
5942	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	3.3-6.6	6.0	3.7-5.8	5.4	1.4-3.9	2.5	3.2
5942	Book stores	3.8-6.1	5.2	3.5-5.4	4.6	0.9-4.6	2.6	3.4
5944	Jewelry stores	4.5-6.3	4.8	4.3-6.1	4.6	1.2-4.9	1.7	3.6
5946	Camera, photographic supply stores*	6.1-8.3	7.4	6.1-8.0	7.0	1.0-2.5	1.9	4.0
5999 pt.	Optical goods stores*	3.7-4.8	4.1	3.9-4.2	4.0	0.7-1.9	1.4	3.8
	Nondurable goods, total	1.0-1.3	1.2	1.0-1.3	1.1	0.1-0.5	0.2	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores	0.1-0.2	0.1	0.1-0.2	0.1	0.0-0.1	0.1	0.1
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ³	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including, leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including, leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including, leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
533	Variety stores	1.9-2.5	2.3	1.9-2.7	2.4	0.2-1.2	0.4	1.2
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	0.4-0.8	0.6	0.5-0.7	0.6	0.2-0.4	0.3	0.4
54	Food group stores	1.2-1.4	1.3	1.2-1.4	1.3	0.1-0.3	0.2	0.5
541	Grocery stores	1.2-1.4	1.3	1.2-1.4	1.3	0.1-0.3	0.2	0.5
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	9.0-10.4	9.2	8.8-10.5	9.5	0.9-3.7	2.1	5.4
543	Fruit stores & vegetable markets*	10.7-14.3	12.5	11.0-12.7	11.8	1.0-7.5	3.1	5.9
544	Candy, nut, confectionery stores*	4.9-9.7	6.5	4.9-9.7	8.1	1.6-4.5	3.0	6.5
546	Retail bakeries	9.4-11.0	10.0	9.4-10.3	10.2	1.3-3.0	2.3	6.5
554	Gasoline service stations	2.0-2.3	2.1	2.1-2.4	2.1	0.2-0.5	0.3	0.8
56	Apparel & accessory stores	1.3-2.0	1.6	1.3-2.0	1.6	0.3-0.7	0.5	1.0
561	Mens & boys clothing, furnishings.	2.5-3.3	2.7	2.5-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.7	1.1	2.0
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	3.4-4.9	4.0	3.3-4.9	4.1	0.3-1.3	1.0	1.3
562	Women's ready to wear stores	3.9-5.5	4.6	3.9-5.4	4.7	0.3-1.3	1.0	1.4
565	Family clothing stores	1.3-2.4	1.9	1.3-2.4	1.7	0.4-1.3	0.7	1.2
566	Shoe stores	3.6-7.2	4.9	3.7-7.1	4.5	0.9-2.3	1.3	2.1
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1-6.2	5.7	5.2-6.1	5.4	0.4-1.2	0.7	1.6
5812	Eating places	5.4-6.6	6.0	5.5-6.5	5.7	0.5-1.3	0.8	1.7
5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	9.9-11.7	10.8	9.8-11.5	10.3	0.6-2.0	1.1	2.5
5812 pt.	Refreshment places	4.0-5.2	5.0	4.1-5.1	4.5	0.6-1.2	0.7	2.4
5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	3.5-4.3	4.1	3.5-3.9	3.7	0.6-1.2	1.0	2.2
591	Drug & proprietary stores	1.2-1.6	1.3	1.1-1.5	1.3	0.2-0.5	0.3	0.9
592	Liquor stores	2.5-3.5	2.8	2.4-3.1	2.7	0.4-2.1	1.0	1.8
5943	Stationery stores*	6.9-9.5	9.1	7.4-8.8	8.1	1.5-5.6	3.2	6.1
596	Nonstore retailers ⁴	5.2-7.8	5.9	5.0-7.8	5.6	1.0-6.3	2.5	3.9
5961	Total mail order ⁵	7.4-10.0	8.8	7.5-10.1	8.7	1.6-8.6	3.5	4.2
598	Fuel dealers	5.2-6.3	5.7	5.5-6.5	5.7	1.0-1.9	1.7	2.6
5992	Florist shops*	9.7-15.0	10.9	9.6-12.1	10.4	1.3-7.9	4.2	6.1
53,56,	GAF, total⁶	0.6-0.8	0.8	0.6-0.8	0.7	0.2-0.4	0.2	0.4
57,594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	2.6-3.6	3.1	2.7-3.3	3.0	0.5-2.3	1.2	1.9

*See Appendix A. Percent Change.

¹The ratio of the preliminary estimate for the current month over the final estimate for the previous month.²The ratio of the preliminary estimate to the final estimate for the same month one year ago.³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business total.⁴Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail-order.⁵The sales estimates for "total mail order," SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁶GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (see Appendix A).

Note: The ranges and medians of the coefficients of variation shown above for the preliminary and final estimates and the ratio of change in sales are based on sales estimates for the six most recent data months.

Table B-2. **Estimated Coefficients of Variation in Percent for Inventories by Kinds of Business**

[Based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variations]

SIC code	Kind of business	Dollar volume inventory estimates	Ratio of 2 consecutive months	Ratio to same month a year ago ¹	SIC code	Kind of business	Dollar volume inventory estimates	Ratio of 2 consecutive months	Ratio to same month a year ago ¹
	Retail Inventories, total	1.2	0.1	0.4		Nondurable goods, total.	0.9	0.1	0.3
	Durable goods, total	2.2	0.3	0.8	53	General merchandise group stores.	0.6	0.0	0.4
52	Building materials group stores	3.2	0.3	1.1	531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) .	0.4	0.0	0.1
55 ex 554	Automotive group	2.2	0.4	1.1	54	Food group stores	1.3	0.1	0.6
57	Furniture group stores	1.7	0.4	0.8	56	Apparel & accessory stores	3.9	0.5	1.6

¹The ratio of the preliminary estimate to the final estimate for the same month 1 year ago.
Note: The coefficients of variation are based on inventories estimates for the six most recent data months.

MONTHLY REVISIONS TO ESTIMATES

Each month the Census Bureau issues three sets of estimates of retail sales: advance, preliminary, and final; two estimates of retail inventories—preliminary and final—are also issued. The Bureau releases “non-final” advance and preliminary data to provide government and private data users with much demanded early measures of consumer spending. However, a necessary part of the process of issuing these early data entails the resultant issuance of minor subsequent revisions. These revisions to the monthly sales and inventories estimates occur because the advance and preliminary estimates are released prior to the collection of all data eventually used in the calculation of the final monthly retail sales and inventories estimates.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau’s retail survey panels. Because of the early reporting and the sampling variability between the subsample and the full sample, the advance estimates will differ from the subsequent estimates for the same month. There are also

differences between the preliminary and final sales estimates because of the difference in the samples as described in the section, “Use of the Rotating Sample and Composite Estimate Procedures” and such nonsampling errors as indicated in Appendix B, “Reliability of Data.” The inventories estimates are also developed from rotating samples of respondents, i.e., most respondents are canvassed at 3 month intervals. Therefore, the differences between the preliminary and final inventories estimates for the same month are due to sampling and nonsampling errors.

For total retail sales, the range of the difference between the last 12 advance and final estimates for the same months was from –0.4 percent to +1.4 percent, with a median of +0.1 percent. The range of difference between preliminary and final estimates was from 1.0 percent to +2.7 percent, with a median of 0.1 percent. The preliminary-to-final difference for total retail inventories over the last 12 months ranged from –0.4 percent to +1.4 percent, with a median of 0.0 percent.

Table B-3. Seasonally Adjusted Advance, Preliminary, and Final Retail Sales Estimates

SIC code	Kind of business	February 1997 (millions of dollars)			Percent differences last 12 months					
					Final/advance			Final/preliminary		
		Advance	Preliminary	Final	Range		Median	Range		Median
					From	To		From	To	
	Retail sales, total	213,175	215,136	213,022	–0.4	1.4	0.1	–1.0	2.7	0.1
	Total (excl. automotive group)	160,183	161,247	160,483	–0.5	1.6	0.2	–0.5	1.9	0.1
	Durable goods, total	87,595	89,225	87,786	–0.4	1.3	0.2	–1.6	4.7	0.1
52	Building materials group stores	11,583	11,670	11,901	–2.0	4.9	1.3	–0.7	2.5	0.2
55 ex 554	Automotive group	52,992	53,889	52,539	–1.6	2.3	0.5	–2.5	5.1	0.1
57	Furniture group stores	11,465	11,904	11,591	–0.6	2.0	0.7	–2.6	3.3	0.2
	Nondurable goods, total	125,580	125,911	125,236	–0.4	1.5	0.1	–0.5	1.3	0.1
53	General merchandise group stores	27,488	27,408	27,507	–0.6	2.3	0.0	–0.1	1.9	0.1
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	21,604	21,495	21,599	–0.4	1.7	0.1	–0.2	1.2	0.1
54	Food stores	35,908	35,971	35,841	–0.3	0.5	0.1	–2.7	0.3	–0.1
541	Grocery stores	33,948	33,936	33,777	–0.5	0.4	0.1	–0.7	0.3	0.0
554	Gasoline service stations	13,702	13,497	13,352	–2.7	2.4	0.4	–1.1	3.8	–0.1
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,630	9,668	9,709	–1.3	2.7	0.0	–1.3	1.4	0.0
58	Eating and drinking places	20,221	20,491	20,467	–1.8	3.2	0.8	–1.0	2.3	0.8
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,857	7,951	8,082	–0.9	2.9	0.3	–1.1	2.5	0.0

Table B-4. Seasonally Adjusted Preliminary and Final Inventories Estimates

SIC code	Kind of business	February 1997 (millions of dollars)		Percent differences last 12 months (final/preliminary)		
				Range		Median
		Preliminary	Final	From	To	
	Retail sales, total	314,986	315,938	–0.4	1.4	0.0
	Total (excl. automotive group)	226,812	227,566	–0.3	1.2	0.0
	Durable goods, total	167,742	167,380	–0.7	1.3	0.1
52	Building materials group stores	22,530	22,564	–0.9	0.8	0.0
55 ex 554	Automotive group	88,174	88,372	–0.6	1.9	0.1
57	Furniture group stores	24,101	22,883	–5.1	1.2	0.0
	Nondurable goods, total	147,244	148,558	–0.3	1.5	0.0
53	General merchandise group stores	57,729	58,388	–0.2	1.6	0.0
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	47,107	47,522	–0.2	1.3	0.0
54	Food stores	28,903	28,580	–1.1	0.9	0.1
56	Apparel & accessory stores	23,505	24,054	–1.2	2.3	0.1

Appendix C.

Adjustment Factors for Seasonal and Other Variations

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been derived by the use of the X-11 ARIMA program developed by Statistics Canada. The program produces factors by using the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program*, U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, Revised 1967. The forecasting options were not used as input to the X-11 ARIMA program. This adjustment program develops more accurate computations and diagnostics than the previously used program. Trading-day factors for adjusting retail sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustments could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in consumer buying patterns during holiday periods, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal, trading-day, and holiday patterns.

A description of trading-day adjustment factors may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series*, Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Holiday adjustment factors were developed by a method similar to that described in *Seasonal Adjustment on Electronic Computers*, pp. 356-359, Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, 1961. Additional details concerning the adjustment factors may be obtained from the Chief, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233.

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary and advance estimates) as input to the X-11 program. When unadjusted advance, preliminary, and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the advance, (one month after the preliminary) preliminary, and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the advance and preliminary months.

Tables C-1 and C-2 present, by kind of business, the combined seasonal, trading-day, and holiday adjustment factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For kinds of business whose last observation is an advance estimate, two months of projected factors are shown. For all other kinds of business, three months of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

Table C-1. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business

SIC code	Kind of business	1996												1997					
		Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	
52	Retail trade, total	0.984	0.996	1.000	0.995	0.983	0.969	0.975	1.004	1.062	1.077	0.983	0.971	0.984	0.996	1.000	0.995	0.983	
	Durable goods, total	1.007	1.015	1.019	1.016	1.001	0.959	0.953	0.970	1.018	1.043	1.004	0.993	1.006	1.015	1.019	1.016	1.001	
55 ex	Building materials group stores	0.995	1.033	1.042	1.044	1.020	1.000	0.987	0.976	0.987	0.980	0.966	0.969	0.992	1.033	1.043	1.044	1.020	
554	Automotive group	1.044	1.047	1.042	1.037	1.017	0.942	0.915	0.924	0.967	1.007	1.032	1.025	1.044	1.047	1.041	1.037	1.017	
57	Furniture group stores	0.955	0.962	0.969	0.964	0.961	0.953	0.982	1.032	1.109	1.139	1.005	0.968	0.955	0.960	0.968	0.964	0.960	
53	Nondurable goods, total	0.960	0.977	0.980	0.972	0.961	0.978	0.998	1.039	1.107	1.116	0.961	0.949	0.961	0.976	0.979	0.973	0.961	
	General merchandise group stores	0.943	0.968	0.975	0.968	0.949	0.965	0.992	1.059	1.155	1.177	0.928	0.920	0.944	0.967	0.974	0.968	0.949	
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.947	0.969	0.975	0.970	0.948	0.964	0.993	1.059	1.153	1.177	0.927	0.918	0.947	0.967	0.974	0.970	0.948	
54	Food group stores	0.988	0.995	0.991	0.985	0.987	0.983	0.975	0.992	1.028	1.046	1.025	1.005	0.988	0.995	0.990	0.984	0.987	
56	Apparel & accessory stores	0.942	0.977	0.983	0.964	0.950	1.003	1.036	1.069	1.136	1.138	0.911	0.891	0.943	0.976	0.983	0.965	0.950	

Note: Data are adjusted for seasonal variations. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (1 month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. Adjustment factors are not included in this table for kinds of business that are not published separately. Adjusted inventory data are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for corresponding kinds of business. Adjusted data for the summary trade totals are obtained by summarizing the adjusted data for the individual kinds of business. The options used to derive factors for each kind of business were selected during the last benchmarking operation and will not be subject to modification until the next benchmarking operation. These options are available upon request.

Table C-2. Combined Seasonal, Trading-Day, and Holiday Adjustment Factors for U.S. Retail Sales

SIC code	Kind of business	1996											1997					
		Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
	Retail sales, total . . .	0.894	0.991	0.978	1.050	1.008	1.005	1.045	0.955	1.010	1.024	1.184	0.885	0.860	0.986	0.980	1.052	1.005
	Durable goods, total . . .	0.895	1.001	1.017	1.085	1.041	1.040	1.058	0.964	1.017	0.967	1.077	0.866	0.858	0.999	1.013	1.083	1.048
52	Building materials group stores	0.774	0.921	1.079	1.196	1.118	1.103	1.089	1.023	1.082	0.966	0.909	0.762	0.744	0.919	1.071	1.198	1.124
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	0.804	0.929	1.059	1.148	1.097	1.118	1.101	1.035	1.102	0.974	0.889	0.784	0.766	0.933	1.046	1.146	1.113
525	Hardware stores	0.779	0.891	1.050	1.166	1.112	1.070	1.043	0.955	1.021	1.026	1.046	0.839	0.755	0.890	1.042	1.191	1.108
55 ex 554	Automotive group	0.937	1.056	1.056	1.117	1.067	1.066	1.070	0.970	1.021	0.915	0.870	0.891	0.898	1.051	1.053	1.109	1.075
551,2, 5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	0.941	1.062	1.058	1.121	1.069	1.064	1.068	0.969	1.016	0.911	0.866	0.892	0.903	1.054	1.056	1.113	1.078
553	Auto & Home supply stores	0.879	0.985	1.022	1.059	1.047	1.082	1.086	0.997	1.062	0.996	0.931	0.890	0.839	0.986	1.021	1.054	1.051
57	Furniture group stores . . .	0.898	0.953	0.909	0.951	0.945	0.957	1.010	0.955	1.002	1.116	1.404	0.914	0.864	0.954	0.903	0.958	0.939
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.883	0.960	0.943	0.991	0.970	1.004	1.039	0.980	1.036	1.127	1.188	0.903	0.849	0.958	0.942	0.994	0.965
5722, 31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	0.900	0.948	0.886	0.919	0.920	0.921	0.981	0.930	0.974	1.120	1.579	0.953	0.866	0.951	0.880	0.920	0.922
	Nondurable goods, total	0.895	0.979	0.957	1.025	0.985	0.983	1.038	0.948	1.005	1.059	1.256	0.898	0.862	0.979	0.953	1.031	0.978
53	General merchandise group stores	0.807	0.915	0.905	0.995	0.959	0.912	1.009	0.908	0.981	1.180	1.680	0.760	0.779	0.928	0.892	1.003	0.950
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.795	0.926	0.898	0.988	0.949	0.902	1.011	0.905	0.974	1.203	1.718	0.744	0.768	0.929	0.893	0.997	0.940
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.)	0.797	0.918	0.908	0.988	0.948	0.901	1.011	0.906	0.975	1.205	1.716	0.745	0.766	0.922	0.905	0.998	0.940
533	Variety stores	0.834	0.934	0.941	1.032	0.935	0.905	0.992	0.894	0.995	1.105	1.714	0.742	0.787	0.964	0.909	1.029	0.944
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	0.841	0.914	0.905	1.016	0.994	0.948	1.002	0.911	1.002	1.117	1.537	0.822	0.810	0.911	0.915	1.020	0.983
54	Food group stores	0.939	1.005	0.969	1.039	1.008	1.026	1.044	0.957	0.994	1.007	1.063	0.981	0.902	1.005	0.965	1.048	0.994
541	Grocery stores	0.940	1.006	0.969	1.040	1.009	1.028	1.047	0.958	0.994	1.007	1.049	0.985	0.903	1.006	0.965	1.049	0.995
554	Gasoline service stations	0.908	0.977	0.987	1.055	1.051	1.067	1.082	0.992	1.020	0.979	0.981	0.933	0.878	0.973	0.988	1.057	1.051
56	Apparel & accessory stores	0.773	0.945	0.944	0.987	0.937	0.909	1.094	0.945	1.006	1.151	1.601	0.720	0.743	0.970	0.911	1.009	0.920
561	Mens & boys clothing, furnishings.	0.806	0.894	0.911	0.960	0.965	0.824	0.934	0.900	0.985	1.147	1.867	0.828	0.774	0.910	0.882	0.980	0.948
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	0.782	0.967	0.968	1.043	0.960	0.895	1.012	0.945	1.011	1.118	1.592	0.712	0.759	0.974	0.957	1.057	0.945
566	Shoe stores	0.801	1.002	1.021	1.043	0.988	0.963	1.254	0.973	0.950	1.033	1.273	0.725	0.764	1.046	0.968	1.070	0.972
58	Eating and drinking places	0.925	1.017	0.992	1.056	1.039	1.044	1.087	0.981	1.012	0.977	0.991	0.913	0.893	1.002	0.997	1.065	1.029
591	Drug & proprietary stores	0.970	1.005	0.989	1.024	0.959	0.974	0.988	0.930	0.991	0.980	1.231	0.988	0.936	1.019	0.968	1.022	0.967
592	Liquor stores	0.863	0.952	0.932	1.013	1.008	1.049	1.054	0.936	0.976	1.041	1.322	0.881	0.830	0.949	0.919	1.039	0.986
53,56, 57,594	GAF, total	0.811	0.916	0.906	0.976	0.940	0.918	1.024	0.917	0.983	1.161	1.676	0.786	0.778	0.921	0.898	0.983	0.931

Note: Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. The sales adjustment factors are not included in this table for those kinds of business for which adjusted data are not published separately. Adjusted sales data are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for corresponding kinds of business. Adjusted data for the summary trade totals are obtained by summarizing the adjusted data for the individual kinds of business. The options used to derive factors for each kind of business were selected during the last benchmarking operation and will not be subject to modification until the next benchmarking operation. These options are available upon request.

Appendix D.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Retail trade SIC Major Groups 52-59, includes establishments primarily engaged in selling merchandise for personal or household consumption and rendering services incidental to the sale of goods.

The kinds of business shown in this report parallel broad classifications defined in the 1987 edition of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) manual. Descriptions of each kind of business follow. Data for some kinds of business are not shown separately but are included in the major group of other totals.

DURABLE GOODS

Building Materials, Hardware, Garden Supply, and Mobile Home Dealers (SIC Major Group 52). This major group includes retail establishments primarily engaged in selling lumber and other building materials; paint, glass, and wallpaper; hardware; nursery stock; lawn and garden supplies; and mobile homes. It includes lumber and other building materials dealers and paint, glass, and wallpaper stores selling to the general public, even if sales to contractors account for a larger proportion of total sales. These establishments are known as “retail” in the trade. Establishments primarily selling these products but not selling to the general public are classified in wholesale trade.

Lumber and Other Building Materials Dealers (SIC 521).¹ Establishments engaged in selling primarily lumber, or lumber and a general line of building materials, to the general public. The lumber which they sell may include rough and dressed lumber, flooring, molding, doors, sashes, frames, and other millwork. The building materials may include roofing, siding, shingles, wallboard, paint, brick, tile, cement, sand, gravel, and other building materials and supplies. Hardware is often an important line of retail lumber and building materials dealers. Establishments known as “home centers” are included here.

Paint, Glass, and Wallpaper Stores (SIC 523).¹ Establishments engaged in selling primarily paint, glass, and wallpaper, or any combination of these lines, to the general public.

¹Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group totals.

Hardware Stores (SIC 525). Establishments primarily selling a number of basic hardware lines such as tools, builders' hardware, paint and glass, housewares and household appliances, cutlery, and roofing materials, no one of which accounts for 50 percent or more of the sales of the establishments.

Retail Nurseries, Lawn and Garden Supply Stores (SIC 526).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in selling trees, shrubs, other plants, seeds, bulbs, mulches, soil conditioners, fertilizers, pesticides, garden tools, and other garden supplies to the general public. These establishments primarily sell products purchased from others, but may sell some plants which they grow themselves.

Mobile Home Dealers (SIC 527).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used mobile homes, including parts and accessories.

Automotive Group (SIC Major Group 55, ex. 554)

This major group includes retail dealers selling new and used automobiles, boats, recreational trailers, and motorcycles; and those selling new automobile parts and accessories. Automobile repair shops maintained by the establishments engaged in the sale of new automobiles are also included.

Motor Vehicle Dealers (Franchised)—New and Used (SIC 551). Establishments primarily engaged in the sale of new automobiles or new and used foreign or domestic automobiles. These establishments frequently maintain repair departments and used car lots and carry stocks of replacement parts, tires, batteries, and automotive accessories. Used car lots and repair departments operated by franchised new passenger car dealers are not considered separate locations.

Motor Vehicle Dealers (Nonfranchised)—Used Cars Only (SIC 552).¹ Establishments primarily selling used cars and not holding a franchise for the sale of new cars.

Auto and Home Supply Stores (SIC 553). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of automobile tires, batteries, and other automobile parts and accessories. These establishments frequently sell additional lines of merchandise such as household appliances, radios and television sets, sporting goods, housewares, and hardware.

Boat Dealers (SIC 555).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used motorboats and other watercraft, including parts, accessories, marine supplies, and outboard motors.

Recreational Vehicle Dealers (SIC 556).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used recreational trailers, campers (pickup coaches), and other trailers for passenger automobiles, and motor homes, including parts and accessories.

Motorcycle Dealers (SIC 557).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used motorcycles and motor scooters, including parts and accessories.

Automotive Dealers, Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 559).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used automotive vehicles, such as snowmobiles, dunebuggies, go-carts, aircraft, utility trailers, and new automotive equipment and supplies, not elsewhere classified.

Furniture, Home Furnishings, and Equipment Stores (SIC Major Group 57)

This major group includes retail stores selling goods used for furnishing the home, such as furniture, floor coverings, draperies, glass and chinaware, domestic stoves, refrigerators, and other household electrical and gas appliances.

Furniture Stores (SIC 5712). Establishments primarily selling household furniture, beds, mattresses, springs, and other sleep equipment. Also included in this classification are establishments selling household appliances, phonographs, radio and TV sets, and floor coverings, provided the receipts from sales of furniture and sleep equipment exceed those from sales of other merchandise.

Floor Coverings Stores (SIC 5713). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of floor coverings and related products.

Drapery, Curtain, and Upholstery Stores (SIC 5714).¹ Establishments primarily selling draperies, curtains, slipcovers, and upholstery materials. Establishments primarily selling custom made draperies and slipcovers for household use also are included.

Miscellaneous Home Furnishing Stores (SIC 5719).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of miscellaneous home furnishings, such as china, glassware, and metalware for kitchen and table use, bedding and linen, brooms, brushes, lamps and shades, mirrors and pictures, venetian blinds, window shades, and fireplace accessories.

Household Appliance Stores (SIC 5722). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of electric and gas refrigerators, stoves, and other household appliances, such as electric irons, percolators, hot plates, and vacuum cleaners. Many such stores also sell radio and television sets. Retail stores operated by public utility companies and primarily engaged in the sale of electric and gas appliances for household use are classified here.

Radio, Television, and Electronics Stores (SIC 5731). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale and installation of radios, television sets, record players, high fidelity (hi-fi), sound reproducing equipment and home computers. Such establishments also may sell additional lines, such as household appliances, musical instruments, or records.

Computer and Computer Software Stores (SIC 5734). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of computers, computer peripheral equipment, and software.

Music Stores (SIC 5735 + 5736).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of musical instruments, phonograph records and albums, sheet music, and similar musical supplies.

Miscellaneous Durable Goods Stores (SIC Major Group 59 part)

This includes all retail durable goods stores not elsewhere classified.

Used Merchandise Stores (SIC 593).² This industry includes stores primarily engaged in the retail sale of used merchandise, antiques, and secondhand goods such as clothing and shoes; furniture; books and rare manuscripts; musical instruments; office furniture, phonographs and phonograph records; and store fixtures and equipment. This industry also includes pawnshops.

Sporting Goods Stores and Bicycle Shops (SIC 5941). Establishments primarily selling a general or a specialized line of sporting goods and equipment for hunting, camping, fishing, skiing, riding, tennis, golf, and other sports; bicycles, bicycle parts and accessories; and gymnasium and playground equipment.

Book Stores (SIC 5942). Establishments primarily selling new books and periodicals. Stationery and related items may also be sold.

Jewelry Stores (SIC 5944). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of any combination of the lines of jewelry, such as diamonds and other precious stones; rings, bracelets, and brooches; sterling and plated silverware; and watches and clocks.

²Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the durable goods stores total.

Hobby, Toy, and Game Shops (SIC 5945).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of toys, games, and hobby kits and supplies.

Camera and Photographic Supply Stores (SIC 5946).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cameras, film, and other photographic supplies and equipment. Excluded are establishments primarily engaged in finishing films.

Gift, Novelty, and Souvenir Shops (SIC 5947).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of combined lines of gifts and novelty merchandise, souvenirs, and miscellaneous small art goods such as greeting cards and holiday decorations.

Luggage and Leather Goods Stores (SIC 5948).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of luggage, trunks, and leather goods.

Optical Goods Stores (SIC 5995).² Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of eyeglasses and related optical goods. Excluded are establishments whose receipts are primarily from examining eyes and prescribing eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Miscellaneous Retail Stores Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 5999).² Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized lines of merchandise such as collectors' items and supplies, artists' supplies, orthopedic and artificial limbs, drafting materials, typewriters, telephones, pets, religious goods, hearing aids, rubber stamps, monuments and tombstones, and other merchandise not elsewhere classified.

NONDURABLE GOODS

General Merchandise Group Stores (SIC Major Group 53)

This major group includes retail stores which sell a number of lines of merchandise, such as dry goods, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, small wares, hardware, and food. The stores included in this group are known as department stores, variety stores, general merchandise stores, general stores, etc.

Department Stores (SIC 531). Establishments normally employing 50 people or more, having sales of apparel and soft goods combined amounting to 20 percent or more of total sales, and selling each of the following lines of merchandise:

1. Furniture, home furnishings, appliances, and radio and TV sets.
2. A general line of apparel for the family.
3. Household linens and dry goods.

To qualify as a department store, sales of each of the lines listed above must be less than 80 percent of total store sales. An establishment with total sales of \$10 million or more is classified as a department store even if sales of one of the merchandise lines listed above exceed the maximum percent of total sales, provided that the combined sales of the other two groups are \$1 million or more. Department store sales have been separately presented for the following classifications:

Department stores (incl. leased depts.), and
Department stores (excl. leased depts.).

Department stores (incl. leased depts.) are also sub-categorized as shown below:

Conventional Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and:

1. Usually provide check-out service and customer assistance (salespersons) within each department.
2. May have a catalog order desk.
3. Are not affiliated with a company which operates similar establishments on a national basis.

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods and hard goods which are primarily nationally advertised brands.
2. Appliances which are serviced by another company.
3. Limited lines of merchandise through seasonal or special catalogs.

Discount or Mass Merchandising Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and usually:

1. Convey the image of a high-volume, fast turnover outlet selling a variety of merchandise for less than conventional prices.
2. Provide centralized check-out service.
3. Do not provide customer assistance within store departments. Merchandise is normally sold through self-service with minimal assistance provided in any department.
4. Do not have a catalog order desk.

³Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: miscellaneous shopping goods stores (594).

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods which are usually their own corporate brands or are unbranded.
2. Hard goods which are primarily nationally advertised brands.
3. Appliances which are serviced by another company.

National Chain Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and:

1. Usually provide check-out service and customer assistance (salespersons) within each department.
2. May have a catalog order desk.
3. Are affiliated with a company which operates similar establishments on a national basis.

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods and hard goods which are their own corporate brands or are unbranded.
2. Appliances which are serviced by their own company.

Variety Stores (SIC 533). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a variety of merchandise in the low and popular price ranges. Sales usually are made on a cash-and-carry basis with the open selling method of display and customer selection of merchandise. These stores generally do not carry a complete line of merchandise, are not departmentalized, do not carry their own charge service, and do not deliver merchandise.

Miscellaneous General Merchandise Stores (SIC 539). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a general line of apparel, dry goods, hardware, homewares or home furnishings, groceries, and other lines in limited amounts. Stores selling commodities covered in the definition for department stores, but normally having less than 50 employees, and stores usually known as catalog showrooms, country general stores, or warehouse clubs are included here. Also included in this classification are establishments whose sales of apparel or of furniture and home furnishings exceed half of their total sales providing that sales of the smaller of the two lines in combination with dry goods and household linens account for 20 percent or more of total sales.

Food Stores (SIC Major Group 54)

This major group includes retail stores primarily engaged in selling food for home preparation and consumption.

Grocery Stores (SIC 541). Establishments primarily selling (1) a wide variety of canned or frozen foods, such as vegetables, fruits, and soups; (2) dry groceries, either packaged or in bulk, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, dried fruits, spices, sugar, flour, and crackers; and (3) other processed foods and nonedible grocery items. In addition, these establishments often sell smoked and prepared meats, fresh fish and poultry, fresh vegetables and fruits, and fresh or frozen meats.

Establishments commonly known as supermarkets, food stores, convenience stores, and delicatessens are included in this classification if receipts from sales of groceries and food items for off-premise preparation and consumption are 50 percent or more of total sales.

Meat and Fish (Seafood) Markets, Including Freezer Provisioners (SIC 542). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of fresh, frozen, or cured meats, fish, shellfish, and other seafood. Frequently these establishments also sell poultry, dairy products, eggs, some groceries, and items commonly used in preparing seafood or consumed with seafood.

Fruit Stores and Vegetable Markets (SIC 543).¹ Establishments primarily selling fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. These establishments frequently carry a limited line of grocery items. Roadside stands of farmers selling only their own produce are not included.

Candy, Nut, and Confectionery Stores (SIC 544).¹ Establishments primarily selling candy, nuts, sweetmeats, and other confections. A soda fountain or lunch counter is frequently operated in these stores. Also included are candy and popcorn stands located in motion picture theaters.

Dairy Products Stores (SIC 545).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of dairy products, such as milk, cream, butter, cheese, and related products, to over-the-counter customers.

Retail Bakeries (SIC 546). Establishments primarily engaged in the over-the-counter retail sale of bakery products such as bread, cakes, pies, or cookies, all or some of which may be baked on the premises.

Other Miscellaneous Food Stores (SIC 549).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized foods, not elsewhere classified, such as eggs and poultry, health foods, spices, herbs, coffee, and tea. The poultry stores may sell live poultry, slaughter and clean poultry for their own account and sell dressed fowls, or sell fowl cleaned and dressed by others.

Gasoline Service Stations (SIC 554)

Establishments primarily selling gasoline and automotive lubricants. Usually these establishments also sell tires, batteries, and accessories, and perform minor repair work

and services. Establishments called garages but deriving more than half of their receipts from the sale of gasoline and automotive lubricants and establishments known as truck stops which are primarily engaged in selling diesel fuel to truckers are also included. Convenience food stores deriving more than 50 percent of their sales from the sale of gasoline are classified as gasoline service stations.

Apparel and Accessory Stores (SIC Major Group 56)

Establishments in this major group are primarily engaged in selling clothing of all kinds and related articles for personal wear and adornment.

Men's and Boys' Clothing and Furnishings Stores (SIC 561). Establishments primarily selling men's and boys' ready-to-wear clothing and furnishings.

Women's Ready-to-Wear Stores (SIC 562). Establishments primarily selling women's and girls' ready-to-wear apparel.

Women's Accessory and Specialty Stores (SIC 563).¹ Establishments primarily selling a specialized line of women's and girls' apparel, such as furs, sportswear, beachwear, blouses, hosiery, millinery, foundation garments, lingerie, robes, and other intimate wear.

Children's and Infants' Wear Stores (SIC 564).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of children's and infants' clothing, furnishings, and accessories. Such establishments may specialize in either children's or infants' wear or they may sell a combination of children's and infants' wear.

Family Clothing Stores (SIC 565). Establishments primarily selling clothing, furnishings, and accessories for men, women, and children, without specializing in any one line.

Shoe Stores (SIC 566). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of any one line, or a combination of the lines, of men's, women's, and children's footwear. These establishments frequently carry accessory lines such as hosiery, gloves, and handbags.

Miscellaneous Apparel and Accessory Stores (SIC 569).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized lines of apparel and accessories not elsewhere classified, such as uniforms, bathing suits, raincoats, riding apparel, sports apparel, umbrellas, wigs, and toupees. This industry also includes custom tailors primarily engaged in making and selling men's and women's clothing (except fur apparel SIC 568) to individual order.

Eating and Drinking Places (SIC Major Group 58)

Establishments in this major group are primarily engaged in selling prepared foods and drinks for consumption on or near the premises and lunch counters and refreshment stands selling prepared foods and drinks for immediate consumption.

Restaurants, Lunchrooms, Cafeterias, and Contract Feeding (SIC 5812 part)

*Restaurants and Lunchrooms.*⁴ Establishments engaged in serving prepared food and beverages selected by the patron from a full menu. Waiter or waitress service is provided and the establishment has seating facilities for at least 15 patrons. These establishments often serve alcoholic beverages, but receipts from the sale of alcoholic beverages may not exceed the receipts from prepared food.

*Cafeterias.*⁴ Establishments engaged in serving prepared food and beverages primarily through the use of a cafeteria line where customers serve themselves from displayed selections. Some limited waiter or waitress service may be provided. Table and/or booth seating facilities are usually provided.

*Contract Feeding.*⁴ Establishments primarily engaged in providing food service under contract to another company; hospital; or governmental, penal, or educational institution. The facilities and personnel of these establishments may be provided by the contracting company, institutions, etc., however, the management is always supplied by the contractor.

Social Caterers (SIC 5812 part).⁵ Establishments primarily engaged in serving prepared food and beverages for weddings, banquets, etc., on the premises or elsewhere. Such establishments also may arrange for some entertainment but this should be a minor part of the business.

Refreshment Places, Ice Cream, and Frozen Custard Stands, (SIC 5812 part).

*Refreshment Places.*⁶ Establishments primarily selling limited lines of refreshments and prepared food items. Included in this group are establishments which prepare refreshment items such as pizza, barbecued chicken, and hamburgers for consumption either on or near the premises or for take-home consumption.

⁴Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Restaurants, Lunchrooms, Cafeterias.

⁵Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Eating Places (SIC 5812).

⁶Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Refreshment Places (SIC 5812 pt.).

*Ice Cream and Frozen Custard Stands.*⁶ Establishments primarily engaged in selling ice cream, frozen custard, or other frozen ices for consumption either on or near the premises. Take-home packages also may be provided for ice cream sold in bulk.

Drinking Places (SIC 5813). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of drinks such as beer, ale, wine, liquor, and other alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises. Prepared foods are frequently sold at these establishments, but receipts from the sale of prepared foods may not exceed receipts from sales of alcoholic beverages.

Drug Stores and Proprietary Stores (SIC 591)

Establishments engaged in the retail sale of prescription drugs and patent medicines and which may carry a number of related lines such as cosmetics, toiletries, tobacco, and novelty merchandise. Included are drug stores which also have a soda fountain or lunch counter. These stores are included on the basis of their usual trade designation rather than on the more strict interpretation of commodities handled.

Liquor Stores (SIC 592)

Establishments primarily selling packaged alcoholic beverages, such as ale, beer, wine, and whiskey, for consumption off the premises. Liquor stores operated by States, counties, and municipalities are included.

Miscellaneous Nondurable Goods Stores (SIC Major Group 59, part)

This includes all retail nondurable goods stores not elsewhere classified.

Miscellaneous Shopping Goods Stores (SIC 594)

Establishments engaged in the retail sale of one or more lines of merchandise similar to that found in department stores.

Stationery Stores (SIC 5943).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of stationery, such as paper and paper products (including printing and engraving), post cards, novelties, and school and office supplies (excluding office furniture and machines).

Sewing, Needlework, and Piece Goods Stores (SIC 5949).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of piece goods, notions, sewing and knitting supplies, fabrics, patterns, and other needlework accessories.

Mail-Order Houses (Department Store Merchandise) (SIC 5961 part). Establishments with normally 50 or more employees primarily engaged in the retail sale by catalog and mail order of a general line of merchandise similar to that sold by department stores.

Other Mail-Order Houses (SIC 5961 part). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a specialized or limited line of merchandise such as food, automotive merchandise, apparel, books, stationery, etc., by catalog and mail order.

Automatic Merchandising Machine Operators (SIC 5962).⁷ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of products by means of automatic merchandising units (vending machines) which are generally located on the premises of other businesses. Those products include candy, nut, and confectionery; milk and ice cream; other beverages; and tobacco products.

Direct Selling Establishments (SIC 5963).⁷ Establishments primarily selling merchandise by house-to-house canvass, by party plan, by telephone, or from a truck. The merchandise includes building materials, hardware, and garden supplies; general merchandise, milk; other foods; apparel and accessories; furniture, home furnishings, and equipment; mobile food service; and books and stationery.

Fuel Oil Dealers (SIC 5983).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of fuel oil.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas Dealers (SIC 5984).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of liquefied petroleum (LP) gas (bottled gas or in bulk.)

Fuel Dealers, Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 5989).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of coal, coke, charcoal, wood, or any combination of these lines.

Florists (SIC 5992).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cut flowers and growing plants. Greenhouses and nurseries are included if receipts are primarily from the sale of products not grown on the premises.

Cigar Stores and Stands (SIC 5993).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, and smokers' supplies. Many of the establishments included in this classification are operated as concessions in places of amusement, railway stations, airports, and other public places.

News Dealers and Newsstands (SIC 5994).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals.

⁷Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Nonstore Retailers (SIC 596).

⁸Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the nondurable goods stores total.

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